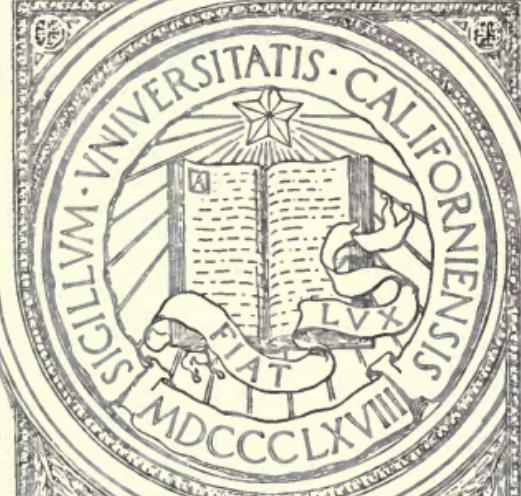


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NARRATIVE

OF THE

TRANSACTIONS

IN

BENGAL,

DURING THE

ADMINISTRATION

OF

M R. HASTINGS.

BY

MAJOR JOHN SCOTT.

9082 6

LONDON:

Printed for J. DEBRETT, opposite BURLINGTON
HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

M.DCC.LXXXIV.

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HARDING

THE control which the Supreme Council of Bengal holds over the other Presidencies, makes the members of that Government in some measure responsible for the peace of India. It will appear very clearly, upon enquiry, that the Governor General and Council exerted themselves to the extent of the powers vested in them by the Legislature, to avert those misfortunes which have been experienced upon the coast of Coromandel; but that a war with a country power should have been commenced with such circumstances of disgrace to our arms, was not apprehended, I will venture to say, either by the Supreme Council or by any man in India.

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Much pains have been taken in India, and the same efforts will doubtless be used in England, to attribute every unfortunate event upon the coast, to the Mahratta war; which, by some in Bengal, and by most of the gentlemen in Madras, has been denominated Mr. Hastings's war. The Court of Directors, who, perfectly acquainted with the circumstances which led to the war, highly approved of the conduct which the Governor General took in it, will, doubtless, do him the justice to contradict this assertion.

In the following sketch I mean to relate the events which led to a war which, from the year 1778, uniformly successful on our part, must have produced an honourable and advantageous peace many months ago, if the invasion of the Carnatic, the destruction of a third part of our army, and the expectation of a French armament, had not given fresh spirits to a vanquished enemy.

Upon other articles the conduct of the Governor General has been grossly misrepresented: it may not therefore be unacceptable to his friends, to relate, as concisely as the importance of the subject will admit, the prin-

principal transactions in Bengal, from the period of his arrival in February, 1772, to the day of my departure from Bengal the 9th of January, 1781; first premising that I will not advance a single fact which I cannot prove, either from my own knowledge or from authentic documents now in my possession.

No man has more severely suffered from unjust and illiberal insinuations than Mr. Hastings; nor has any man less deserved them: since, even in his own justification, he has carefully avoided all personal reflections. It is much to be lamented, that the public has suffered as well as Mr. Hastings, by the impression which such insinuations did at the time make upon the Court of Directors; for to what other cause can it be owing, that, for so many years, they with-held their confidence from a man they once thought so worthy of it? Conscious of the rectitude of his own actions, he has been too little solicitous to stem that torrent of calumny and abuse which his opponents have so liberally bestowed upon him. It is now high time to refute these calumnies. I do not hesitate to declare, nor am I

apprehensive of committing myself too far by such a declaration, that to render our possession of Bengal of consequence to the British nation, Mr. Hastings must be supported, and with effect, both by Government and the East-India Company. The event will prove that my judgment has not been warped by my private affections.

FEEBARY,
1782.

JOHN SCOTT.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

IN the present very critical and important situation of the affairs of the East-India Company, a re-publication of the following Narrative, which has long ago been out of print, may perhaps not be unacceptable to the Public, as I have studiously confined myself to a relation of such facts as are of public notoriety, or are capable of complete proof from the records at the India House. It has been, of late, too much the fashion to misrepresent the conduct of our countrymen in India, and to assert that Bengal is going fast to decay. — I conscientiously believe that the merits of the Governor General, and his Council, from the commencement of the war in the Carnatic, to the date of the last dispatches from India, will secure to them the applause

applause of the candid and dispassionate part of mankind, when the prejudices which have been industriously raised by artful and designing men shall cease to operate: — and from every observation I was capable of making in the course of fifteen years residence in Bengal, I am convinced that that country has very considerably increased in population and manufactures, from the year 1767 to 1781, although a famine in 1770 swept away a third of its inhabitants. Since that period the Company has been involved in a very hazardous and expensive war; and for a considerable time our army in the Carnatic was fed as well as paid from Bengal. The astonishing resources of that country, and the abilities of the men who have governed it, are now generally known and acknowledged; and however the calamities of war may have desolated the Carnatic, it is certain that at no period has Bengal enjoyed a greater degree of internal prosperity than during the government of Mr. Hastings. The Narrative is now continued to the period of the latest accounts we have received from India.

JOHN SCOTT.

QUEEN SQUARE,

JAN. 4, 1784.

A NARRATIVE.

A
N A R R A T I V E
O F T H E
T R A N S A C T I O N S
I N
B E N G A L.

MR. Hastings was appointed by the Court of Directors to succeed to the Government of Bengal, in the month of April, 1772, immediately after the great famine. They were also pleased to invest him with some extraordinary powers, not heretofore vested in a Governor, from a conviction, that if their affairs there were yet retrievable, Mr. Hastings, (whose perseverance, firmness, and integrity, both in Bengal and Madras had been remarkably conspicuous,) was the most proper person to be employed in so arduous an undertaking. It is well known that the Government of Bengal was from various causes at this time reduced to the greatest distress. The late Governor, though a most amiable and respectable character, possessed neither the vigour

or resolution which his public station required; and the Members of his Council submitted to the continuance of evils which they wanted either the power or the inclination to reform. The Company's annual expences in Bengal considerably exceeded their revenues; and although bills had been drawn upon the Court of Directors for more than a million sterling in 1770, there still remained a bond debt of a million and a half sterling, due to individuals in Bengal. There was a prospect also of this bond debt being monthly increased to the degree, that the expences and the investment exceeded the actual revenues of the provinces.

So supine a Government must have sunk of itself in a few years. That this was the real state of public affairs at Bengal, when Mr. Hastings arrived there, is known to every man at that time in India. In April 1772, he succeeded to the chair, and, arduous as the task of reformation is in all countries, but more particularly in Bengal, he instantly began upon it. The excessive civil charges in Calcutta were retrenched, unnecessary appointments were abolished, and that spirit of extravagance and dissipation which had pervaded all orders of men, was suppressed, both by precept and example.

Notwithstanding opposition from many individuals, Mr. Hastings steadily pursued his plan of reformation, regardless of the personal obloquy which attended it, and in less than a month from his accession to the chair, the face of affairs was totally altered.

altered. Every resolution of Government was carried into effect with a promptitude and spirit which did honour to its executive members.

The Court of Directors at this time determined to stand forth themselves as Dewans of the provinces, through the agency of their own servants; and Mr. Hastings lost no time in carrying orders so beneficial to the Company into execution. He proceeded to Moorshedabad, the residence of the Nabob and the native officers of the Government, attended by three Members of the Board, with an intention to investigate the state of the revenues, to reduce the charges incurred in the collection of them, and to establish provincial Courts of Justice, which might prevent those acts of oppression and arbitrary power that had hitherto been so much complained of.*

Unfortunately for the Company in this, as in many other instances, Mr. Hastings had not the power to carry his whole plan into execution; but those regulations which he did establish will ever remain as the strongest proofs of the extent of his genius, and of the laborious attention he paid to every point which could in the least degree contribute to secure the natives of Bengal in the possession of their property.

* It was at this period, that Muny Begum was appointed the guardian of the young Nabob, and the Court of Directors, as soon as they heard of the appointment, expressed their approbation of it in very warm terms.

The same unremitting attention was paid to public business, on his return to Calcutta; and the Court of Directors were very early in their acknowledgements of Mr. Hastings's services, and of the benefits which were derived from them.

At the close of the year 1772, a new scene was opened in Bengal. To the spirited and decided part which Mr. Hastings then took in foreign politics, are the Company and the British nation indebted for the dominions and the extensive influence which they now enjoy in Indostan. To set this matter in its true point of view, and not with a design to reflect upon the political conduct of any person, it is necessary to revert to the period of Lord Clive's government.

The East-India Company's affairs were so thoroughly investigated by a Committee of the House of Commons in 1772, whose proceedings have since been made public, that it is needless to relate the steps by which we have arrived at our present power in India. The Company's agents in Bengal were inoffensive and reputable merchants when they were attacked without provocation, by that most despicable of tyrants, Surajah Dowlah, the grandson of an usurper: They were at first driven from their possessions, but had afterwards the good fortune to see their persecutor vanquished and deposed: His successor, Meer Jaffier, who owed his promotion entirely to us, beheld the increase of our power with a jealous eye, and concerted a scheme with the Dutch for our destruction. The

firmness

firmness of Colonel Clive defeated the project, and in the succeeding Government it was necessary to depose the Nabob. A chain of well-known events brought on a war with the successor, and his restoration. In one campaign, Cossim Ally was driven from the provinces. Sujah Dowlah, Nabob of Oude and Vizier, unprovoked by us, invaded Bahar; he was defeated, and had thrown himself upon our mercy at the time that Lord Clive returned to Bengal in 1765; his Lordship dictated his own terms to the King, Sujah Dowlah, and the young Nabob of Bengal. We had certainly a right to retain the possession of countries which we had conquered in a just and necessary war, and Lord Clive undoubtedly gave the Princes of Indostan a conspicuous proof of his moderation, when he only required fifty lacs of rupees from the Vizier as a compensation for the restoration of his country, and the cession of Benares.

By the treaty which his Lordship concluded with the King, he guaranteed to him the possession of the provinces of Corah and Allahabad, and engaged to pay him twenty-six lacs of rupees annually from the provinces of Bengal. Perhaps all the objections to so fatal a drain of specie from Bengal did not then occur to his Lordship, or Patna or Monghier would have been fixed upon as the place of his Majesty's residence. In this case, the evils which have since befallen the unhappy monarch would have been prevented, and our provinces considerably benefited, by having the amount of the tribute annually circulated in them. Still the condition

dition implied in the treaty was undoubtedly, that his Majesty should reside under our immediate protection at Allahabad, which he quitted in June, 1771, at the instigation of the Marattas, who had engaged to conduct him to Delhy; a project this prince had much at heart.

By leaving Allahabad, he quitted our protection; and Mr. Hastings, who arrived in Bengal early in the next year, very justly concluded, that the first use which the Marattas would make of their royal guest, would be to extort from him the provinces of Corah and Allahabad. He had authentic intelligence soon after, that grants of these provinces were actually made to them and signed by the King; and if his Majesty's commands were at all events to be obeyed, we might be required in another year to evacuate Bengal. The danger that was to be apprehended from having the Marattas (not at that time broken by intestine divisions) so near us was early foreseen, and wisely guarded against by an alliance with Sujah Dowlah, which being concluded on the firm basis of mutual interest, was in no danger of being violated.

It is well known that this Prince had been considered as a disaffected Ally during the governments of Mr. Verelst and Mr. Cartier. By his conduct in 1768 he had so far excited the suspicions of a majority of the Select Committee, that they deputed * two of their members, and a gentleman of the Council, to expostulate and to treat

* General Richard Smith, Mr. Cartier, and Mr. Russell.

with him. In Mr. Hastings's administration he became a most useful and valuable ally.

When Mr. Hastings succeeded to the Government, the province of Bengal had been nearly exhausted of its circulating specie, by the annual tribute of twenty-six lacks of rupees to the King, by the remittances in silver to China, to Madras, to Bombay, and to Europe ; not a rupee of which ever returned again ; by the total stop which was put to the importation of bullion from Europe, in consequence of the great increase of our own investment, and the supplies which were afforded to foreign companies, by the servants of the Company, who had no other means of remitting their fortunes to Europe ; the fatal effects of which Mr. Verelst had foreseen, and represented very fully to the Directors in a series of letters which do great honour to his abilities and foresight.

The regulations which were framed by Mr. Hastings on his accession to the chair, although they immediately contributed to the happiness of the natives, and would in time prove highly beneficial to the Company, were not efficacious to relieve their present wants. The distress of the Directors for cash at home was very great ; they had been obliged to have recourse to Parliament for assistance, in consequence of the large drafts which had been made upon them from Bengal. Their chief dependance was upon Mr. Hastings to extricate the Company from their difficulties, both in Europe and in Asia. Their confidence

was

was not misplaced, and their most sanguine expectations were fully answered. Foreign trade was encouraged to a greater degree than had before been known*, and a new commerce, by the way of Suez, was opened in consequence of the encouragement given to it by Mr. Hastings, which promised a relief to the languid circulation in Bengal, opened a quick communication with Great Britain, and has since been of the most essential advantage to us. Dustucks were abolished in the provinces, and every species of undue influence suppressed as far as the authority of Government could suppress it.

The King, as I before observed, having ceded Corah and Allahabad to the Marattas, it became a question, whether we should tamely permit them to take possession of those provinces with the prospect of Bengal being invaded the following year, or instantly secure them. The latter resolution was taken, and a member of the Council was deputed to form an exact statement of their revenues in May, 1773. The King was at this time a prisoner at large at Dehly, slighted and despised by the Marattas, who proposed to invade the dominions of Sujah Dowlah, by the route of Rohilcund. To prevent this invasion, the first brigade, consisting of one regiment of Europeans, six battalions of Seapoys, and twenty pieces of cannon, had formed a junction

* In 1773, Mr. Hastings deputed Mr. George Boyle to Thibet. He was very hospitably received by the Grand Lama, where he resided above a year: a communication has since been kept up between the two countries, which is highly advantageous to Bengal, and promises to be still more so in future.

with the troops of Sujah Dowlah and the Rohillas, and were advancing towards the banks of the Ganges, by forced marches. The Marattas, who had forded that river, recrossed it with precipitation, as we advanced, were pursued, and prevented from doing any other damage than the plundering and burning a few inconsiderable villages in Rohilcund. When the approach of the rains swelled the Ganges, our troops returned to Oude. This expedition laid the foundation of the Rohilla war, of which I shall speak more fully hereafter.

Sujah Dowlah had repeatedly and earnestly solicited a personal conference with Mr. Hastings, to which he consented, and met him at Benares, in September, 1773, a few months after we had taken possession of Corah and Allahabad.

It was at this time that Mr. Hastings concluded the treaty of Benares, which in its consequences was so extremely beneficial to the East India Company.

The principal articles were the cession of Corah and Allahabad to the Vizier, the increase of the subsidy, and our engagement to assist him in the conquest of Rohilcund.

The nominal revenues of Corah and Allahabad were twenty-five lacks of rupees per annum; but the actual collections fell greatly short of this sum: nor could any collections be made without the assistance of a strong military force. Several disaffected Zemindars were to be reduced; and these provinces were separated from our other possessions by the Zemindary of Cheyt Sing, the Raja of Benares,

at that time a tributary to Sujah Dowlah. Mr. Hastings, after the maturest reflection, consented to cede these countries to Sujah Dowlah, in consideration of his paying fifty lacks of rupees to the Company. This article of the treaty was highly approved of by the Court of Directors.

We were bound by Lord Clive's treaty with the Vizier to assist him with a military force, and he was to pay thirty thousand rupees* a month for a complete brigade; which was supposed to be equivalent to the additional expence incurred in the field, though it was in fact very inadequate to it. Mr. Hastings thought, and with justice, that Sujah Dowlah should pay the whole expence of an army acting at his requisition, or a sum equivalent to it. This he consented to, and it was fixed at two lacks and ten thousand rupees a month.† This alteration was warmly approved by the Directors.

The articles by which the Company were engaged to assist the Vizier in the conquest of Rohilcund, however severely attacked both in Bengal and in England, may certainly be defended on the strictest grounds of policy and justice.

The Rohillas‡ were a tribe of Afghan Tartars, who about twenty-six years before this time invaded and conquered a large and fertile tract of country lying to the eastward of the Ganges, boun-

* 3000L. † 21,000L.

‡ Dow's History of the Decline of the Mogul Empire, published in 1768, p. 37, gives this account of the Rohillas: "In the year 1744, Ali Mahummud, a Patan of the Rohilla tribe, a soldier of fortune, and native of the mountains of Cabalistan, begun to appear in

ded on one side by the north-east frontier of Oude, and on the other by what are called the Cachmere-hills, which are a continuation of those mountains that separate Bengal from Thibet. Some of the original invaders of this country are yet living. The fixed inhabitants are Hindoos. The Rohillas are Mussulmen and soldiers to a man. The revenues were regularly collected and divided amongst the different chiefs, of whom the most considerable were Fyzula Cawn and Haffez Hamet. The Vizier had long beheld, with great mortification, the settlement of the Rohillas in a district which had formerly been dependant upon Oude; but as our

in arms. He had some years before come to Dêhly, and was entertained in the service of Mahummud Shaw, and the command of a small district between Dehly and Lahore was conferred upon him; here he entertained all vagrants of his own clan, who came down in quest of military service from their native mountains; not paying his rent, Hernind, the Fogedar, to whom he was accountable, raised 15000 men to expel or chastise him; he was defeated with great slaughter, and thus Ali laid the foundation of the Rohilla government. Upon this defeat, the Vizier sent 30,000 men under his son against the rebels. Each side averse to a decision by battle, a treaty was concluded, whereby Ali was to keep the country before governed by Hirnind, upon paying the ancient revenues to the Crown: no payment was made, and Ali continued to strengthen himself, and ravaged the neighbouring country to subsist his army: at last the monarch himself was obliged to take the field. Ali shut himself up in Bangur, where he was obliged to capitulate. He was carried a prisoner to Dehly, where he remained six months; at the end of which the Patans not only obtained him his release, but the Feuedarship of Sirhind. There he maintained himself, and collecting his dispersed tribes, kept possession not only of Sirhind, but several districts between the rivers, and beyond the Ganges, without remitting one rupee to court." This happened in 1747.

Government had entertained so strong a jealousy of his power, previous to Mr. Hastings's accession, and had kept up a correspondence with the Rohillas, he had been prevented from subduing them ; and it is also probable that he did not think himself equal to the conquest of the country without our assistance.

A bare inspection of the map will prove of how much consequence it was, that the power in possession of Rohilcund should be in a strict alliance with us.

The soil is so fertile, that an army of Marattas might subsist in it for any length of time. It is full of strong forts for the security of plunder ; and from hence, in the course of one season, their ravages might have been extended through the dominions of the Vizier into Bengal. When, therefore, the Marattas were masters of the King's person and of Dehly, and threatened to invade the country of an ally, whom by treaty, and from policy we were bound to defend, it was absolutely necessary either to conclude a defensive alliance with the Rohillas, or to take possession of their country.

Many small states in Europe have been precisely in the same situation. It was impossible that they could remain neuter in our approaching rupture with the Marattas ; and they concluded an alliance with the Vizier and the Company, by which we engaged to protect their country from the ravages of the Marattas ; they on their part were to join us with their forces, and at the conclusion of the campaign to pay forty lacks of rupees, as their proportion of the expences of the war,

The Marattas, as I before observed, did invade Rohilcund, but we arrived so opportunely, that they were obliged to retreat very precipitately. The Rohillas, as we advanced, peremptorily refused to join us, and it was proposed to storm their camp; which they prevented, by forming a junction when we were upon the point of carrying this design into execution.*

On the return of our troops to Oude, the Vizier demanded the stipulated payment of forty lacks, which at first was evaded, and afterwards absolutely refused.

Such was the state of this business when Mr. Hastings met the Vizier at Benares.

That the Rohillas would dread the Vizier's resentment, for this breach of faith cannot be doubted; and that, to guard themselves against the effects of it, they would apply to the Marattas for assistance was highly probable. In truth they did negotiate with them. I need not mention the many fatal consequences with which such an alliance would have been attended. Success in the Rohilla war extended and secured the frontier of an ally; and it was founded on their breach of a treaty, to which we were guarantees, and their alliance with his enemies.

The advantages which the East-India Company were to reap from the war, were great indeed: Our exhausted provinces were to be relieved from the pay

* It was at this time that Sir Robert Barker denominated the Rohillas the most faithless and treacherous of men, and proposed that we should put the Vizier in possession of their country.

of a third part of our army during the service ; and we were to receive fifty lacks of rupees at the conclusion of it.

The danger apprehended from an increase of the Vizier's power was merely ideal, as the event has fully proved. Mr. Hastings, who had studied his character, knew it perfectly well ; but the gentlemen at home, who had for a long time been alarmed by accounts of the *dangerous ambition* and *high spirit* of Sujah Dowlah, deemed every addition which we might make to his power a measure founded upon *wrong policy* *. Fortunately, however, for the Company and the British nation, the man who managed their political affairs in Bengal, clearly foresaw, and steadily pursued their true interest.

The Rohilla war commenced in 1774, the conquest of the country was effected in seven months, and an equitable peace was concluded with Fyzula Cawn, the principal Rohilla chief, which has continued from that period uninterrupted.

I should exceed the bounds which I have prescribed to myself, were I to enter into a detail of Mr. Hastings's public proceedings from his return to Calcutta in September 1773, to the commencement of the new Government in October 1774, when his authority was effectually annihilated. But

* General Richard Smith's letters to the Select Committee of Fort William, when he commanded the army, contain strong expressions of suspicion against Sujah Dowlah. It has since been fully proved, that the General had entirely mistaken the Vizier's real character.

the concurrent testimony of the English gentlemen then in Bengal, the flourishing state of the Company's affairs, the increase of wealth, and the affection shewn by the natives to our Government, are ample proofs that every moment of his time was employed in pursuing the true interests of his constituents.

In the year 1767, I have travelled four hundred miles through a country very thinly inhabited; the appearance of an European with his attendants excited distrust and apprehension. I have travelled the same road since that period; I then found it in high cultivation. The natives, secure under the protection of humane and equal laws, were increasing in numbers, and no longer looked upon Englishmen as enemies.

It is certain, however clamour may have obscured the truth, that the lower ranks of people in no part of the world live more happily, or are less oppressed than the natives of Bengal and Bahar. The abuses which existed after our accession to the Dewanne, are more to be attributed to a defective system of Government, than to the want of inclination to correct them in the members of administration; nor could these abuses be corrected until the Governor and Council were authorised to break through the forms of a double Government.

At Mr. Hastings's accession to the chair, he entirely new modelled the public offices, and allotted to each its distinct business. The mode of collecting the revenues, as well as the quantum to be collected,

lected, had heretofore been regulated by the Resident of the Durbar and Mahomed Reza Cawn; and even after the establishment of provincial councils, Moorshedabad continued the seat of Government. But when the double Government, as it has been properly called, was abolished, Mr. Hastings removed all the native officers of it to Calcutta, and brought every department of finance immediately before the Council.

His regulations of the public offices, of the collections, and the various œconomical reforms, which, notwithstanding the difficulties preventing, and the odium consequent, he had effected in the short space of thirty months, added to the supply of treasure, which the treaty of Bengal afforded, had raised the reputation of the government of Bengal to the highest pitch, and the Company's affairs, which, when he succeeded to the chair, were thought to be irretrievable, bore the strongest aspect of affluence and prosperity. The time however was now come, when the abilities of the man who had done so much for the Company were to be decried, and his character exposed as a subject for public derision.

On the 19th of October, General Clavering, Colonel Monson, and Mr. Francis, arrived in Calcutta, and with the Governor General and Mr. Barwell, composed the Supreme Council of India. No Government could have commenced under more favourable circumstances. Our treasury was full; foreign trade flourished to a greater degree than had ever been known in Bengal. Inland commerce was freed from

from every impolitic restriction. The reputation of our arms was great, and the supply of wealth to Great Britain by the investment (the only proper mode of enriching our native country from India) had increased every year since Mr. Hastings came to the Government. The Gentlemen who then arrived from England, had no personal connections to gratify; they had not been bred up in the Company's service; nor had they formed friendships, to which a small portion of their constituents's interests might have sometimes been sacrificed; (human nature will still be the same!) and their own appointments were so ample as to preclude even the temptation to act from interested motives. With such advantages, why has it happened that the British nation has not experienced all those good effects which the wisdom of the Legislature predicted when the Supreme Council of India was established? I shall relate facts as they happened, without a wish to reflect in the smallest degree upon two gentlemen of great honour and undoubted integrity, who are now no more; and who, I think, would have heartily co-operated with Mr. Hastings, if much pains had not been taken to deceive them by designing men, who unfortunately were but too successful in so pernicious an undertaking.

Although Mr. Hastings received an addition to his former title by the act which constituted the Supreme Council, his powers were considerably curtailed by the instructions of the Court of Directors. Under these circumstances, he was at first undeter-

mined, whether to resign or to retain the Government; but the violent conduct of a decided majority determined him to remain in the chair at all events.

The flame of opposition broke out with great violence at the second meeting of the Supreme Council. The Governor General, for the information of his colleagues, drew up a clear and distinct statement of our political situation. Our alliance with the Vizier, the advantages which we had already received, and might in future expect to receive from it. Our alliances or connections with the native powers in Indostan, and every other particular which it was necessary to communicate to gentlemen vested with so high a public trust, and who at the same time were so intirely uninformed with respect to a country, which from that moment they were to govern. To elucidate some part of his minutes, Mr. Hastings delivered into the Board several extracts from Mr. Middleton's letters, who had resided for some months by his appointment at the Court of Sujah Dowlah.

A member of the Board immediately proposed that the Governor General should lay before them the whole correspondence of Mr. Middleton. This was so direct an attack upon the honour of Mr. Hastings, that he absolutely refused to comply with the requisition; and from this moment commenced the attack upon his former administration.

They began with the Rohilla war. It was a war, they said, which would bring dishonour upon the nation. The money to be received, which they declared

clared would never be paid, was the price of blood. Our army was exposed, in the dominions of a treacherous ally, to the most imminent dangers, and the majority determined to recall it immediately, provided the retreat could be effected with security to our own troops, though at that time Fyz Ulla still stood out ; and by abandoning the Vizier, the fifty lacks which we were to receive from him would not have been demandable.

By proceedings thus violent and unjustifiable, the great advantages which have since accrued to the Company had nearly been forfeited ; but the earnestness of the Governor General for a short delay in the execution of these intemperate orders had fortunately some effect. The non-payment of the subsidy due from the Vizier to the Company, was the principal cause assigned for the recall of our army, although the bad policy of advancing our troops beyond the Carumnassa * was warmly insisted upon at the same time. A part of the money due by the treaty was soon after paid by the Vizier ; this payment, as well as that of the remainder, was represented as the recovery of a desperate debt ; and it was confidently asserted, that the recovery of so large a sum was owing to the firmness and resolution of the majority, though it had never been conceived that he meant to deduct any part of the payment.

Mr. Middleton was immediately recalled from his station ; and Mr. Bristow, the confidential friend of

* That river divides the province of Bahar from the province of Benares.

Mr. Francis, appointed Resident at the Vizier's court in his room.

The Governor General's conduct, in points which had already been referred to the judgment of the Court of Directors, was severely attacked; almost melancholy picture was drawn of the distressed state of the provinces; the natives were said to groan under every species of oppression, and even murders to have been committed with impunity in our most populous cities.

To those, who for more than two years had lived under a Government, vigorous far beyond what had ever been known in India, such a representation appeared extraordinary indeed.—On Mr. Hastings's arrival, our dominions and our influence were bounded by the banks of the Carumnassa. The Company was sinking under the weight of a heavy bond debt, an expensive civil establishment, and an army which cost more than a million sterling annually, and which could not with prudence have been considerably reformed. When the majority of the Supreme Council assumed the Government, the bond debt was reduced, and funds provided for paying off the remainder; the public disbursements were regulated; the pay of a third of our army was furnished by Sujah Dowlah; and by its remaining in Oude we had a prospect of still farther advantages, which were afterward realized.

Mr. Hastings, sensible of these advantages, and of the falsehood of the gloomy presages of the majority, in his separate letters to the Directors, assured them,

them, that their affairs were at no former period in so flourishing a situation ; that they would receive a large investment ; the bond debt would be paid off, and a large sum retained in the treasury for emergencies in the course of the following season.

The majority contradicted and ridiculed this representation ; but the event has proved that it was not made without full consideration ; nor can it be denied that Mr. Hastings alone is entitled to the merit of paying off a debt of a million and a half, of reserving an equal sum in the treasury of Bengal, of supplying Madras, Bombay, and China with cash, and adding very considerably to the annual investment. His civil regulations in 1772, and his negotiations with Sujah Dowlah in 1773, have, in their consequences, fixed us so securely in the possession of Indostan, from the source of the Ganges to the Ocean, notwithstanding the temporary distress under which we now labour, from Hyder Ally Cawn's successes in the Carnatic, that we are in no danger of a reverse of fortune, except from internal dissensions.

In the condemnation of past measures, no public act of the Governor General's was passed over without a comment. By giving up Corah and Allahabad to the Vizier, he sold what was the property of another ; by with-holding the tribute which we were by treaty engaged to pay to the King, he forfeited the national faith ; and even admitting that it would have been imprudent to furnish his Majesty with so large a sum, when he was a prisoner with the Marattas, it ought

ought at least to have been reserved as a deposit in Calcutta: Probably the consequences of with-holding such a sum as a crore of rupees from circulation, when we could hardly find money for our necessary expences, was not considered by the majority. However, as the Court of Directors in the first letter which was received from them in 1775, very highly approved of the sale of Corah, and the non-payment of the tribute, no farther remarks were made on Mr. Hastings's conduct in these points.

I now enter, and I confess with much regret, upon the conduct of the majority towards Mr. Hastings as a private gentleman, in which his reputation was principally concerned. I lament sincerely that gentlemen of high honour and unblemished characters should have been so warped by their prejudices. But such are the fatal effects of party spirit.

This attack was authorised by a very impolitic though well-meaning order of the Court of Directors; "That the Supreme Council should enquire into past abuses." A similar order had beeen given to Mr. Hastings on his accession to the Government, and it is now needless to lament the fatal consequences which were occasioned by an inattention to his opinion upon it. Mr. Hastings had found it impossible to detect or to punish those who had abused the confidence reposed in them. Much valuable time was lost, and much odium incurred by the attempt.

Mr.

Mr. Verelst and Mr. Cartier were men of honour, whose public virtue could not be better proved than by the very moderate amount of the fortunes which they brought home with them. From various causes, however, the Company's affairs were in great confusion ; and the Directors attributing it to the bad management of their servants in Bengal, were, with reason, anxious to detect those who were guilty, and therefore earnestly pressed Mr. Hastings to commence a retrospect of their conduct. But when the Supreme Council arrived in Bengal, our affairs were in so flourishing a state, that such an order was surely unnecessary.

I will quote Mr. Hastings's opinion upon this subject ; it reflects the greatest honour upon him. The letter from which I have taken the following extract, is dated the 11th of November, 1773 ; and if not received in London before the departure of the majority of the Supreme Council, might have been transmitted to them very shortly after.

“ All my letters addressed to your honourable Court, and to the Select Committee, repeat the strongest promises of prosecuting the inquiries into the conduct of your servants, which you had been pleased to commit particularly to my charge. You will readily believe that I must have been sincere in those declarations, since it would have argued great indiscretion to have made them, had I foreseen my inability to perform them. I find myself now under the disagreeable necessity of avowing that inability ; at the same time that I will boldly

“ boldly take upon me to affirm, that on whomsoever you might have delegated that charge, it would have been sufficient to occupy the entire attention of those who were entrusted with it, and even with all the aids of leisure and authority, would have proved ineffectual. I dare appeal to the public records, to the testimony of those who have opportunities of knowing me, and even to the detail which the public voice can repeat of the past acts of this government, that my time has been neither idly nor uselessly employed. Yet such are the cares and embarrassments of this various state, that although much may be done, much more, even in matters of moment, must remain neglected. To select from the miscellaneous heap which each day's exigencies presents to our choice, those points on which the general welfare of your affairs most essentially depends, to provide expedients for future advantages, and guard against probable evils, are all that your administration can faithfully promise to perform for your service, with their united labours most diligently exerted. They cannot look back without sacrificing the objects of their immediate duty, which are those of your interests, to useless researches, which can produce no real good, and may expose your affairs to all the ruinous consequences of personal malevolence both here and at home.

“ May I be permitted to offer it, in all deference and submission to your commands, as my opinion, that whatever may have been the conduct of individuals,

" viduals, or even of the collective members of
 " your former administrations, the blame is not so
 " much imputable to them as to a want of a prin-
 " ciple of government adequate to its substance, and
 " a coercive power to enforce it. The extent of
 " Bengal and its possible resources are equal to those
 " of most states in Europe. Its difficulties are greater
 " than those of any, because it wants both an esta-
 " blished form and powers of government; deriving
 " its actual support from the unremitting labours
 " and personal exertions of individuals in power,
 " instead of the vital influence which flows through
 " the channels of a regular constitution, and impercep-
 " tibly animates every part of it. Our constitution
 " is no where to be traced but in the ancient char-
 " ters which were framed for the jurisdiction of your
 " trading settlements, the sales of your exports, and
 " the provision of your annual investments. I need
 " not observe how incompatible these must prove to
 " the government of a great kingdom, and for the
 " preservation of its riches from private violence, and
 " embezzlement.

" Among your servants, who for a course of years
 " have been left at large, in possession of so tempt-
 " ing a deposit, it is not to be wondered at, that
 " many have applied it to the advancement of their
 " own fortunes; or that those who were possessed of
 " abilities to introduce a system of order, should
 " have been drawn along by the general current;
 " since few men are formed with so large a share of
 " public virtue as to sacrifice their interest, peace,

“ and social feelings to it, and to begin the work of
“ reformation on themselves.

“ I should not have presumed to expatiate on a
“ subject of this nature, although my own justifica-
“ tion has made it in some measure necessary ; but
“ that your late advices have given hopes that we
“ shall speedily be furnished with your instructions
“ for establishing a system of law and polity, which
“ we hitherto want. Whenever this work shall be
“ accomplished on a foundation of consistency and
“ permanency, I will venture to foretel, from the
“ knowledge which I have of the general habits and
“ manners of your servants, that you will have as
“ few instances of licentiousness amongst your ser-
“ vants as amongst the members of any community
“ in the British empire.”

What impression this solid and conclusive reasoning of the Governor General made upon the Court of Directors is not known ; but the East-India Company would have felt the good effects of it most sensibly, if, in consequence of this opinion, the Court of Directors had new-modelled their instructions.

The disagreement in the Supreme Council became the general subjects of conversation in India. New hopes and fears were excited in all—every former transaction of Government was harshly censured—and the majority publicly declared, that they expected Mr. Hastings would be dismissed with disgrace from his station, as soon as their representations arrived in England.

When every act of Government which could be attributed to Mr. Hastings had been canvassed, his

private

private character was attacked, and the man who had filled the most important stations in India with an unblemished reputation, who might with ease have accumulated a fortune of two hundred thousand pounds, during the many years that he was resident at the Court of Meer Jaffier, but who, it is well known, returned to his native country without a competency, was publicly accused of the most flagrant acts of rapacity and extortion, and of having amassed a fortune of four hundred thousand pounds in little more than two years.

To those who are acquainted with the moderation of Mr. Hastings's character, with his neglect of his private interest, this accusation appeared as absurd as it was ill founded; but the proof was at hand, and Nundcomar stepped forth to support what they had advanced. It would indeed have been a cruel circumstance if the oath of Nundcomar had operated to the disadvantage even of a man as bad as himself; but that it should have had the least weight in the accusation of a character so respectable, and so firmly established as the Governor General's, will hardly be credited when the spirit of party has subsided: yet certain it is, that upon the assertion of this wretch, the majority fixed Mr. Hastings's fortune at forty lacks of rupees.

To gentlemen at all conversant in the affairs of Bengal, the character of Nundcomar was well known. Mr. Hastings had employed him on his first arrival by the express order of the Directors, to whom he had explained his sentiments of the man very freely.

He in fact foretold to them the part Nundcomar would act, if ever he had an opportunity. Captain Swinton, in his evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons, declared that Nundcomar had been repeatedly guilty of forgery, and for this crime he suffered death in August 1775; whether strictly legally has been questioned, but there never was a doubt of the fact of his being perjured, nor of the majority knowing he was so, when they accepted his service in accusing Mr. Hastings.

This man, before he was committed to custody, had opened what may properly be called an information office in Calcutta. It was well known, that he was countenanced by the majority. I am very clear that neither General Clavering nor Colonel Monson were aware of the dangerous use to which he would apply the power which he had acquired; but certain it is that the most liberal encouragement was given to informers of every denomination by the majority. Accusations as absurd as improbable were hourly received against the Governor General; but although divested of all power, although Nundcomar was possessed of the means of proving his guilt, had he really been guilty, after the fullest inquiry, with rewards offered on the one hand and punishments denounced on the other, in order to procure the evidence which he wanted to criminate the Governor General, nothing appeared that reflected either upon his honour or his integrity; unless it could be deemed a crime to receive from the Nabob a certain fixed sum for his expences during his residence at Moorshedabad, in conformity to the customs of the country,

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and to the examples which had been set him by his predecessors, Lord Clive, Mr. Verelst, and Mr. Cartier. It was acknowledged by Sir George Wombwell in the General Court in 1776, that the allowance was to be taken, and that if he had given the Company credit for it, he might have charged them the expences of his progress : this allowance had been settled by Lord Clive in lieu of purveyance. *

Let it for a moment be supposed that Mr. Hastings had accumulated the large fortune which the majority supposed him to be possessed of. Was it made at the expence of the East-India Company—had he added to the weight of their bonded debt—had he involved them in dangerous or expensive alliances—had he neglected to make the necessary remittances of cash to our other Presidencies, or to China—or had he diminished the annual investment to Europe—there might have been some excuse for inquiring into the amount of his private fortune, and how he amassed it. But when this inquiry commenced, the Company's bond debt of a million and an half was paying off ; supplies had been sent to China, Fort St. George, and Bombay ; two additional ships, the Anson, and the Northumberland, had been taken up in Calcutta. So much was the investment increased ; and the death of Sujah Dowlah gave us a prospect of a still farther addition to our power, our influence, and our resources.

* General Smith must know this state of the fact to be correct ; and he knows that he himself never passed through Moorshedabad without receiving a complimentary present, agreeable to the custom of the country.

However, I will take upon me to affirm, that when the amount of the Governor General's private fortune is known, it will appear to the most moderate man in England to be greatly inadequate either to the length or to the importance of his services.

During these violent attacks upon the character of Mr. Hastings, all public business was suspended. The inferior servants of the Company were divided into parties, and after the example of the Presidency, each Provincial Council had its majority, and minority. Expensive prosecutions were commenced in the Supreme Courts of Judicature against the Governor General of India, who was reluctantly obliged, in vindication of his own honour, to bear a part in this disgraceful scene. At a time when our dominions and our influence were so greatly increased, at a time when the gentlemen of Bombay had commenced a war against the Marattas, at a time when the attention of every member of the Board should have been entirely employed in the consideration of the great political questions which were before them —at this time, the Governor General and Council were attending as evidences or parties in a Court of law; Mr. Hastings in his own defence, and the gentlemen of the majority, as guardians of the interests of the East-India Company, to criminate the man who had so essentially served his constituents.

So salutary were the regulations which Mr. Hastings had established, so firmly was the government fixed in all its parts, that notwithstanding these

these unhappy dissensions, our affairs were at no former period in so flourishing a situation; and in the course of the years 1775 and 1776, every promise which the Governor General had made to the Court of Directors was amply fulfilled. Whether this prosperity was owing to Mr. Hastings's regulations, and the political connections which he formed previous to the 19th of October 1774, or to the abilities and exertions of the Supreme Council since that period, can at once be determined by an examination of the Company's records.

A treaty highly advantageous to the Company was concluded with Asoph ul Dowlah, by which the sovereignty of Benares, with all the rights and powers annexed to it, was transferred to us, and a nett revenue of twenty-four lacks of rupees acquired. The continuance of a brigade in the Vizier's dominions was another article of the treaty, and the subsidy fixed at two lacks and sixty thousand rupees a month. Let not the Governor General be deprived of the merit of these important acquisitions. The majority would never have agreed to advance our troops beyond the bounds of the Carumnassa; they even were anxious to recal them immediately, and were only prevented from actually doing so, by the earnest opposition of Mr. Hastings. In either case, the death of Sujah Dowlah would have been attended with no advantages to the Company. The provinces of Oude, Corah, and Allahabad would have been torn by civil wars, and must, in the end, have been subdued, either by Nuzeph Cawn or the Marattas.

In September 1776, Colonel Moison died. No man was more ready to do justice to that gentleman's abilities than Mr. Hastings, or more sincerely lamented the unhappy prejudices which he imbibed on his first arrival in Bengal. Bred a soldier, and having served with distinguished reputation in India, he was admirably calculated for the command of our army in Bengal; to which had he fortunately been appointed, and confined to his professional duties, the Company would have experienced the good effects of his return to India in a very sensible degree.

At this period too we received advice of the extraordinary revolution at Madras. The Supreme Council were unanimous in their opinion of the measures to be taken upon so critical an occasion, and of the powers which Lord Pigot claimed, as President of a Council in which he had only a casting voice when the numbers were equal. That the powers of a Governor in India are very inadequate to the dignity of his station, and to the responsibility annexed to it, is beyond a doubt. This was Mr. Hastings's opinion, and he expressed it very freely to the Court of Directors, in the letter of which I have already given an extract: but until those powers are enlarged, a Governor, with a majority against him, must be a mere cypher. The Governor General had only taken upon him to break up the Council, when the majority had called Nundcomar before them, for the extraordinary purpose of preferring

ferring a criminal accusation against their President, and the first British subject in India. For this small exertion of authority he was severely reprimanded by the Court of Directors, and plainly informed, that he had no distinct authority annexed to his station, but that all the powers of government were vested in a majority of the Board. Could the Governor General allow, that a law which was to bind him, was not of force when applied to the Governor of a subordinate presidency? The Court of Directors' sentiments on this subject were of sufficient force to determine the Supreme Council, had the reference made to them by the gentlemen of Fort. St. George been a point of difficulty.

It was necessary to mention this unhappy business, because Mr. Stratton has published some partial extracts of a private letter, which he received from the Governor General immediately after that revolution, from which it might appear that he was interested in the dispute, although he had not the smallest personal concern in it. To those who have seen the whole letter, this explanation is unnecessary.

By the orders of the Company, wisely framed with a view to comply with Asiatic customs, all political negotiations are conducted through the channel of the Governors of the different presidencies. A native of India can have no idea of a participation of power, and he very naturally concludes that a Governor is either absolute, or has no power in the state over which he presides.

When the connection of this government with Sujah Dowlah was more closely cemented, Mr. Hastings thought proper to appoint Mr. Nathaniel Middleton his private agent at the court of that prince. When the Supreme Council was divided into two distinct parties, Mr. Middleton was recalled, and Mr. Bristow, the confidential friend of Mr. Francis, appointed in his room.

By this step the annihilation of the Governor General's political influence was completely proclaimed to every power in Indostan. While Mr. Bristow remained at Lucknow, Mr. Hastings could only be looked upon as the constrained instrument of an authority raised upon the ruin of his own. This evident truth will not be disputed by any man who has served in India; from the period of Colonel Monson's death to the time of Mr. Middleton's re-appointment to the Vizier's court, the attention of every man from Calcutta to Dehly was fixed upon this single point, as the criterion by which he was to judge, whether Mr. Hastings meant to retain or to give up the government. I do not rest the propriety of this measure upon the obligation which Mr. Hastings lay under, of doing an act of justice to an individual who had suffered severely for his attachment to him. But I insist upon it, that the public service could not be carried on with effect, while an opinion prevailed in Oude, that Mr. Hastings was upon the point of quitting the chair; and such would have been the conclusion had Mr. Bristow been permitted to remain there. He was known to

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be the confidential friend of Mr. Francis; and however Mr. Hastings might have approved of his conduct, he could not give a person so situated his entire confidence, even admitting it possible to answer the other objections, which I will venture to affirm are not to be controverted.

The Governor General surely should not be expected to conduct the complicated affairs of an extensive empire, where our countrymen bear so very small a proportion in point of numbers to the natives, upon principles so different from those upon which all countries are regulated, and so totally different from those by which the late majority professedly acted. The late Mr. Playdell was deprived of the office of superintendant of the police (which was immediately given to the brother-in-law of Mr. Francis) for his activity in presenting an address to the chief justice that was obnoxious to the majority*. Mr. Playdell complained bitterly of the ill usage which he had received, but it was observed in reply, that what had happened to him, was the chance of the worthiest men in England upon every change in administration, and that no wise government would ever employ men in offices of trust under them, of whose attachment they were not very well assured.

* Writs had been attempted to be taken out, which would have reached every part of Bengal and brought natives to Calcutta; the Court refused them. This moderation and justice procured them an address of thanks from the different sets of inhabitants at Calcutta.

This reasoning, however it may appear in the case of Mr. Playdell, whose appointment was of very little consequence to the state, is surely conclusive in that now before us.

The removal of Mr. Fowke from Benares was from the same motive.

Benares is one of the richest cities in India. It is the residence of learned men, and the center of all political business. Vackeels, or agents, from every prince in India reside here, and as the British government is confessedly now the most important in Indostan, it is absolutely necessary that the resident at Benares should be dependant upon the ruling party in the Supreme Council. Upon this principle was Mr. Fowke sent there by the majority, and upon the same principle was he recalled after Colonel Monson's death. It is sufficient to state these facts as they really are, and then the Governor General's conduct towards Mr. Bristow and Mr. Fowke will need neither a justification nor an apology. Whoever shall attribute these removals to a personal pique, or shall conceive Mr. Hastings capable of gratifying a private resentment at the expence of Mr. Bristow and Mr. Fowke, will be much deceived. He is too liberal to act from such narrow principles!

Every measure proposed by the Governor General, however salutary, was opposed by General Clavering, and supposed to be ultimately intended to answer some private view. The settlement of the Jands, having been made for five years only, was on the point of expiring soon after Colonel Monson's death:

death: Mr. Hastings proposed to obtain the fullest information of the state of the country, that the revenues might be fixed upon an equitable scale: to assist him in the laborious task which he had imposed upon himself, he had fixed upon two gentlemen of distinguished abilities and irreproachable characters, whose proceedings were to have been laid before the Council at large, in whom was vested the power and decision upon every point. Much valuable information was procured and transmitted to the Court of Directors in consequence of this investigation, both as to the state of the country and its population and resources; but at that time it really appeared sufficient to blast every scheme, however beneficial, that it was proposed by Mr. Hastings: The minority questioned its legality; and General Clavering denominated it a trick to extort money from the Zemindars for the benefit of Mr. Hastings and his friends.

The last material act of Mr. Hastings's administration, previous to the death of General Clavering, was, the increase of our military establishment; a measure which has been attended with infinite advantages to the public and to individuals, and has effectually secured the continuance of our influence in the extensive dominions of the Vizier. To set this matter in a clear point of view, and to free it from the false lights which may be thrown upon it, I will briefly relate the steps which led to it.

Sujah Dowlah died in February 1775. His eldest son, Asolph ul Dowlah, was declared the heir of his father's

father's dominions; but he owed his peaceable succession to the Musnud to the presence of our army. Intrigues were immediately formed against him; and in his troops, mutinous and disaffected, were many officers in the interest of his competitors. The Vizier, justly alarmed for his personal safety, which had frequently been endangered, disbanded the most turbulent of his battalions, and applied to the Supreme Council for British officers to discipline those which he retained in his service. In consequence of this requisition, nine captains and thirty subalterns were appointed to his service, and were to receive the pay of the rank next above that which they held in Bengal. No funds were fixed for the payment of these officers, or of the troops which they were to command; so that, in fact, this new establishment was subject to all those inconveniences which it was meant to redress.

A General spirit of mutiny broke out amongst the Vizier's troops immediately after the arrival of our officers; this in some batalions was carried to the most alarming lengths. Many officers were seized, confined, and threatened to be put to death. The storm at length subsided. The principal mutineers were punished, and discipline was in some measure restored. Many however were the disadvantages which our service sustained by this establishment. The emoluments were so considerable to those who had the good fortune to be appointed to the Vizier's service, that it created a general spirit of discontent amongst our officers in Bengal; and trifling as the establish-

establishment was in point of numbers, the expence of it so far exceeded all bounds, that the Vizier was unable to keep it up, and to discharge his debt to the Company. Certainly a service in which the emoluments to individuals so far exceeded those in our own, required some regulations. Mr. Hastings had seen the bad effects of a similar establishment in the Carnatic, and the Company at this moment most severely feel it: upon Colonel Monson's death he proposed a remedy for them.

On the principle that our interests and the Vizier's were thus closely connected, Mr. Hastings brought his plan before the Board, which was, that three regiments of horse, three companies of artillery, and nine battalions of Sepoys, should be added to our establishments, and with this addition of force we were to protect the Vizier's dominions. The disciplined corps in his service were to form this body; and to fix them more firmly in our service, they were to take their tour of duty in our provinces, and to be subject to the same regulations with respect to pay as the rest of our army. The Vizier was to appropriate certain fixed funds for the payment of these troops, so that this important addition to our army was made without the smallest expence to the East-India Company.

Beneficial as this plan must appear, and to which only one objection could be urged, the difficulty of procuring the Vizier's assent to it, it was vehemently opposed. Mr. Francis contended, that all military arrangements should originate with the Commander in

in Chief, although this was evidently a great political regulation of the highest consequence. The General's objections were numerous. The Vizier's consent was obtained through the agency of Mr. Middleton; the plan was soon after carried into execution, and has so completely answered every good end which was proposed by it, that even those gentlemen who lost considerably by the alteration, have been candid enough to declare, that no act of Mr. Hastings's administration redounds more to his honour or to the Company's advantage, than this establishment, formed against the opinion of the Commander in Chief, and the opposition of Mr. Francis.

The provinces of Oude, Corah, Allahabad, Rohilkund, and the Doab, have been protected, the revenues have been collected, and the troops have been regularly paid from the day this establishment took place; and in the year 1780, the general relief of the army was effected; by which these new battalions were brought into our provinces, and relieved by an equal number from Bengal.

In August 1777, General Clavering died. A man whose character must be always considered with respect, as his errors arose from a good principle, the hatred of corruption. He certainly brought with him to Bengal a rooted prejudice against the Company's servants in general, and a very unjust one against Mr. Hastings in particular. The Court of Directors, by their instructions, in which, from the best motives, they authorised a review of past transactions,

actions, opened so wide a field for imposition, that the General's prejudices were still more confirmed by the improbable tales which were hourly brought to him. The violence of the majority absolutely created a party, where otherwise there would have been none.

Mr. Hastings, through the whole course of his public life, had given the strongest proofs of his integrity and disinterestedness; Sir John Clavering's has never been questioned; had some pains therefore been taken to unite such respectable characters, the intention of the Legislature in forming the Supreme Council would have been effectually answered; but as it was, the first impressions which the General received, from a certain perseverance in his temper, grew stronger every day, and the interest of the East India Company unhappily suffered by it.

I do not mean to infer that no abuses existed in Bengal when the Supreme Council arrived there. Let it be considered that Mr. Hastings was the President of a Council, in which he had a casting voice only when the numbers were equal, consequently that he would sometimes be obliged to accommodate his opinion to the sense of the majority of his Council; but it is a certain truth, that whilst he had the lead, he did more to reform abuses than any other man would have done or attempted: The establishment of the Supreme Council was calculated for completing his plans of reformation, a work in which he would most cordially have taken the lead; but unfortunately he was obliged to give up that time,

which might have been so valuably employed for the public service, to the justification of past, and successful measures, and even to the defence of his private character.

Passing over common occurrences, I come to that period in which arose the present expensive (though when Mr. Hastings's scheme prevailed, successful) war with the Marattas. It has been industriously endeavoured to impute the origin as well as the progress of this war to Mr. Hastings. The Court of Directors are possessed of the fullest evidence to the contrary; and both living testimony, and authentic documents prove, that its origin is not owing to him, and that the continuation of it is the effect of necessity.

It will be proper to take up this important subject from the first connection of the Bombay Council with Ragonath Row, otherwise called Ragobah.

Although the nominal sovereignty of the Maratta state was in a Raja, the real administration of government, as well as the power inherent to it, was possessed by a Bramin family, under the title of Pashwa, or Chancellor; and this authority was so fixed in them, that it became hereditary; and in case of infancy, the State was governed by a Regent, who was generally the nearest in blood. Narrein Row, the last Pashwa, died, leaving no children; and Ragobah, who was his uncle, became Pashwa. During an expedition, which carried him to a distance from his capital, the Council (consisting of Bramins) dispossessed him, giving out that the widow of Narrein was with child,

child, and accusing him of having assassinated his nephew. The first of these facts was doubtful, the latter most probably false, he having been in confinement for a long time before that event, without any communication with the conspirators. Soon after it was given out that the widow of Narrein was delivered of a son; and Nana, with Saccaram, and others of the Bramin Council, acting, as they alledged, in support of the infant, drove Ragobah from Poona, and reduced him to such distress, that he applied for assistance to the Presidency of Bombay.

Not relying solely on the justice of his cause, the more readily to obtain assistance, he offered to make some very valuable cessions of territory to the East-India Company. A treaty was concluded, by which we engaged to assist him with a military force; and an army from Bombay took the field under the command of Colonel Keating; whether our forces, in conjunction with Ragobah's would have conducted him in triumph to Poona is uncertain, but it can hardly be doubted that a few spirited operations would have been productive of an advantageous peace with the ministerial party, both for the Company and for Ragonaut Row.

Intelligence of the transactions at Bombay, was received at Calcutta a few months after the first meeting of the Supreme Council, whose authority having been totally disregarded, either from inadvertence or design, produced very serious consequences. The treaty with Ragobah having been concluded without the sanction of the Governor

General and Council, was disavowed; and an officer of rank (Lieutenant Colonel Upton) was deputed to Poona, with instructions to conclude a peace upon almost any terms, with the ministers who were denominated the ruling members of the Maratta state; and the English army was ordered to march back.

So glaring a condemnation of past measures, and so pointed an interference in their affairs, naturally tended to destroy the influence of the gentlemen of Bombay, upon the Malabar coast; while it provoked their passions and excited their resentments. Under these circumstances, a co-operation with Colonel Upton could not be expected. It had been fortunate if, from that moment, the Government of Bombay had been fixed upon a plan of the most rigid œconomy; and their troops had been confined to the defence of Bombay, the castle of Surat, and the island of Salsette.

Mr. Hastings, although he joined with the other members in disapproving the conduct of the Presidency of Bombay, thought that there might exist circumstances which should prevent the return of the army, but he was over-ruled, and the moderation of our demands was attributed very naturally, by the Marattas, to a want of ability to carry on the war. Colonel Upton was five months on his journey to Poona. He was treated with great disrespect by the Maratta Chiefs through whose countries he passed. The Ministers, on his arrival, complained bitterly of our interference in their family disputes; and were so high in their demands, insisting even upon the restoration of Salsette, that Colonel Upton broke off the

negociation ; and by his first dispatches to Calcutta, it was supposed that the war would be continued. But this was a mere trick of the Ministers, who were anxious for an accommodation ; and on the first of March, 1776, a treaty of peace was signed by Colonel Upton, on the part of our government ; and on their side was authenticated, by the seal of the Pashwa, an infant of about two years old, and by the signature of his two Ministers, Sacaram Bappoo and Nana Furnese. By one article of the treaty, a provision was made for the subsistence of Ragobah, their late competitor, on condition of his residing in the heart of the Maratta dominions, with a guard appointed by the Ministers themselves, for his state and security. This clause, as might reasonably be expected, defeated the intention of the treaty, since it left Ragobah at the mercy of his enemies, without any pledge or engagement for his safety. The consequence was, that he fled to Bombay, and claimed the protection of that Government for the security of his person.

The Ministers exclaimed against this protection ; and mutual complaints of the violation of this treaty were made by them and the Bombay Council. About the Month of May, 1777, the Chevalier St. Lubin made his appearance at Poona, in the public character of a Minister from the Court of France. He was received with great honour, and in a little time written engagements were mutually interchanged between him and Nana Furnese, by which he promised to bring a regiment of Europeans, with military stores to Poona, for the service of the Maratta state. Intelligence of this treaty, at first doubted,

was soon confirmed by authorities of unquestionable credit, and by a series of facts of public notoriety. It had been always the Governor General's opinion, that this was the only way by which the French could hope to regain their consequence in India, or to affect ours; and he reasonably expected, that the Presidency of Bombay, which was more immediately interested in the effects of such a connection, would take some steps to render it abortive. This was by no means difficult. The Maratta army under Hurry Punt Furkia, was at that time engaged in an unequal war with Hyder Ally. The Ministers quarrelling among themselves, possessed little authority, and were dependent for that little upon their own vas-
sals. The Presidency of Bombay had long shewn an impatience to revive the cause of Ragobah; and the slightest movements made by them in his favour would have proved sufficient to overthrow the feeble power which they had to contend with, and to establish their own influence in the Maratta state on its ruins. But Mr. Hastings, that he might leave no means untried to avoid a rupture with the Marattas, and to counteract the French influence at Poona, formed a treaty, which he meant should remedy all the defects of that concluded by Colonel Upton; every article of which, at that time remained unexecuted. This treaty was laid before the Board in Calcutta, with a very long explanatory minute, on the 23d of January, 1778, and will, if read with the attention it deserves, entirely exculpate the Governor General from the smallest suspicion of a desire to involve the East-India Company in a war with the

the Marattas. On the 29th of January, whilst this minute lay for consideration, a letter was received from Bombay, dated the 12th of December, 1777, informing the Supreme Council that a proposal had been secretly made to the Governor and Council, through their agent at Poona, by a party which had been formed against Nana Furnese, consisting of Sacaram Bappoo, who had signed the treaty, and other considerable men, with a potent Raja, Tuckajee Holkar, to assist them in the design of reinstating Ragobah in the chief administration of the Maratta state; and that they had agreed to join in it, requiring only, as a preliminary condition, a written application to the same effect, under the hands and seals of the confederates. They excused themselves for having so far engaged, without the previous authority of the Supreme Council, by the obvious necessity of an immediate decision; and they requested their acquiescence and assistance in it. On the receipt of this letter, the Governor General and Council resolved to ratify what they had done, to authorize them to proceed, and to send them an extraordinary supply of ten lacks of rupees for the undertaking. It was also resolved, to assist them in the execution of their plan with a military force.

In forming these resolutions the majority of the Supreme Council were swayed by the following considerations.

1st. In the event of a rupture with France, which was daily apprehended, the connection formed by Nana Furnese with St. Lubin, and the engagement which he had entered into to land a regiment of Europeans

Europeans with military stores at Poona, might, if carried into effect, be productive of the most dangerous consequences to the Company's influence, and their possessions in India. This could be prevented only by the removal of the party so closely connected with our natural enemy, and therefore this was an object of the first importance; and Ragonaut Row was the instrument for this purpose. Mr. Hastings had no predilection for this Chief, nor is it possible to attribute his conduct to any interested view,

2dly, Authorising the gentlemen of Bombay to take part with Ragobah, was a strict compliance with the orders of the Court of Directors contained in the following paragraph of their general letter of the 5th of February 1777.

“ His (Ragobah's) pretensions to the supreme authority, either in his own right, or as guardian to the infant Pashwa, appear to us better founded than those of his competitors; and therefore, if the conditions of the treaty of Poona have not been strictly fulfilled on the part of the Marathas, and if, from any circumstances, you shall deem it expedient, we shall have no objection to an alliance with Ragobah, on the terms agreed upon between him and the Governor and Council of Bombay.”

3dly, The restoration of Ragonaut Row would have been attended by an accession of territory upon the Malabar coast to the amount of the annual expences of the Presidency of Bombay; by which means no farther drains would have been made from our treasury in Bengal.

4thly, The restoration of Ragobah was not a breach of the treaty of Poona, because that treaty was signed by Saccaram Bappoo and Nana Furnese only; and Saccaram, the first Minister in rank, with the principal officers of the Maratta state, joined in the proposal to the gentlemen of Bombay, for his return to Poona.

Mr. Francis and Mr. Wheler, however, strenuously opposed the measure, on various grounds; and amongst others, because it was in disobedience to the order of the Court of Directors.

I must here interrupt my narrative, to observe in what view the Directors considered the conduct of the Governor General in this instance.

About the 29th of July, 1778, the Court of Directors received dispatches both from Bombay and Bengal, in which they were informed of the plan proposed to the Presidency of Bombay, by the opponents of Nana Furnese, of the sanction given to it by the Governor General and Council, and of their resolution to assist them with money and a considerable reinforcement, in order the more effectually to carry it into execution, and to support them in the consequences of it. These advices the Court of Directors thought of such great importance, that on the 29th of August 1778, Colonel Capper was applied to by the Select Committee of the Court of Directors, to carry a packet to Bombay, of the greatest national importance. He accordingly left London the 1st of September, and by the letters which he brought, both the gentlemen of Bengal and Bombay had the satisfaction to receive the fullest approbation of the

Directors, who express very strong anxiety for Ragogah's restoration, and the overthrow of that party at Poona in alliance with the French. The first ship of the season brought out a complete approbation to Mr. Hastings, for the part which he had acted in this important business.*

On the 23d of February, 1778, orders were issued for forming a detachment of six battalions of Sepoys, one company of native artillery, with a regular proportion of field artillery, to which were afterwards added the first regiment of cavalry and five hundred of the Vizier's Candahar horse. Colonel Leslie was appointed to command this force, and ordered to march directly to Bombay by the shortest route he should judge most practicable, and for the sequel of his operations, he was to obey the orders of the President and Council of Bombay. This detachment crossed the Jumma the latter end of May, with slight and ineffectual opposition from Ballajee Pundit, the chief of the Maratta territories dependent upon Culpee. In the mean time the design which had furnished the occasion of this expedition was suffered to sleep at Bombay, the violent ardour of that Presidency for the cause of Ragonaut Row ceasing with the removal of the bar which had been laid on the prosecution of it. It produced however the principal effects intended by the promoters of it. These suddenly assembling their forces on the 30th of March, deprived Nana Furnese of his authority, and invested Moraba Furnese with it in his stead. This easy revolution, without bloodshed or contest, proved

* These letters were approved by his Majesty's Ministers.

the extreme weakness of the Maratta government, and the great facility with which the plan, offered to the Presidency of Bombay, might have been executed in its full extent, had they immediately engaged in it. When the gentlemen of Bombay first heard of Colonel Leslie's march, they ordered him to halt; and a few days after, they sent him an order to prosecute his march, but without any object described, or plan of operations proposed, or thought on: thus abandoned by the Presidency of Bombay, Mr. Hastings had recourse to other means which were more within the compass of his own direction, and for which he had in some degree made a provision a considerable time before, on the presumption of the utility of which it might prove in the event of a rupture with the Marattas.

When the Supreme Council determined to send a detachment to the other side of India, the Governor General applied to the Raja of Berar to grant his permission for its free march through his territories, with such assistance as it might require on the way. He received an immediate answer to his application on such terms as he wished, and the Raja at the same time sent a person to the banks of the Nurbudda, which bounds his dominions to the north, with a store of grain for the subsistence of the detachment, and orders to attend it through his country, of which he advised Colonel Leslie, inviting him to take that route, and assuring him of his most friendly reception.

The nominal Sovereign of the Maratta state, who had languished in honourable confinement at Sattarah,

Rajah Ram Rajah, died in December, 1777. He left no children, and Moodajee Boosla, Rajah of Berar, had the fairest pretensions to the succession, being in direct lineal descent from the ancient stock, and the adopted son of Sahoo Rajah, the predecessor of Ram Rajah, though deprived of his right by the artifices of Ballajee, who was the Pashwa, when Sahoo Rajah died. Mr. Hastings judged Moodajee Boosla to be a proper person to supply the place of Ragobah, in the plan offered to the Supreme Council for overturning the French influence at Poona. He possessed wealth, power, and a territory extending from the borders of Bengal almost to Poona. Ragobah had neither wealth nor power, nor had he influence to supply the want of these requisites, except what might arise from the Presidency of Bombay taking an active part in his favour, and it did not then appear that they took any. Mr. Hastings wished and expected the proposal of an alliance to come from Moodajee, and he had deputed his Vackel to him for that purpose, a man of understanding, and well instructed; but it now became necessary to take a more active and determined part.

On the 7th of July, 1778, advices, deemed worthy of credit, were received from Cairo that war had been declared between Great Britain and France; at Paris on the 18th, and in London on the 30th of March. The destination of Count d'Estaing's fleet was not then known. It was very naturally supposed to be intended against Bombay, and the first advices which were received from England tended still more strongly to confirm this supposition.

The Chevalier St. Lubin was known to be still at Poona, and to hold frequent conferences with the ministers of the Pashwa. The Supreme Council, regardless of all personal consequences, determined instantly to take possession of all the French settlements in Bengal, and of the ships in the river.* At the same time, they earnestly recommended to the Presidency of Fort St. George, to commence the siege of Pondicherry immediately, and if possible to secure the friendship of Hyder Ally Cawn. It was also resolved to enter into a negociation with Moodajee, on the grounds which I have mentioned above. Mr. Elliot was deputed on this service. At Cuttack he overtook Mr. Chevalier, the Governor of Chandernagore, who had escaped from that place, and was so far in his way to Pondicherry. Mr. Elliot had the address to persuade Moodajee's Deputy at that place, to consent to his apprehending Mr. Chevalier; which he did, and sent him a prisoner to Fort William. By his papers, the reality of the French scheme against us was fully evinced. He then proceeded towards Naigpore, the capital of Berar: the whole service could not have afforded an agent more proper for such an embassay, and Mr. Hastings's hopes were proportionably raised, but as suddenly blasted by the untimely death of that very valuable young man, about a fortnight after he had left Cuttack. It is more than probable

* The Governor General and Council took possession of all the French settlements and their ships in the river of Bengal, in consequence of the private advices transmitted to them from Cairo by Mr. Baldwin.

that if Mr. Elliot had arrived at Naigpore, an alliance of the most beneficial consequence to the East-India Company would have been concluded with the Rajah of Berar.

Colonel Leslie, when Mr. Ellot died, had advanced but 120 miles from Calpee, having employed so much of his time in settling the family disputes of the Bundella Chiefs. He was recalled from his command on the 7th of October ; but by his death, Colonel Goddard had succeeded to it before the letter reached the camp.

Colonel Goddard immediately prosecuted his march to the banks of the Nerbudda, and was empowered, on his arrival there, to treat with Moodajee. He deputed his interpreter to the Court of that Prince ; who, in his letter to Mr. Hastings, after the death of Mr. Elliot, had desired the negotiation might be transferred to his secretary ; and had expressed the strongest inclination to bring it to a conclusion.

A second, and unexpected revolution was effected at Poona on the 16th of June, and Moraba Furnese was imprisoned, with his principal adherents. Moraba, before his imprisonment, had made proposals to the Presidency of Bombay, who had resolved to conduct Ragobah with an army to Poona ; a circumstance well known to Moodajee, who, in consequence of it, declined the alliance which was proposed to him, deeming Ragobah's interests incompatible with his own : but with very cordial professions of friendship for the English nation, which he evinced,

evinced, by furnishing Colonel Goddard with cash, provisions, and draft cattle for his artillery. Colonel Goddard advanced towards Poona by quick marches.

I have already observed that the Bombay gentlemen had reassumed their design in favour of Ragobah. The period at which they reassumed it was unfavourable; Ragobah's principal adherents were confined, and Colonel Goddard, whose army would by its presence have insured success, was at a considerable distance. I wish to relate facts, and not to comment upon them. On the 23d of November the Bombay army, consisting of one hundred and forty-three artillery, five hundred and forty-eight European infantry, two thousand two hundred and seventy Sepoys, and five hundred Lascars, was transported to the Continent. On the 23d of December, they ascended the Gauts, and marched towards Poona, and on the 9th of January it was determined to retreat, on account of a scarcity of provisions, although they had a supply for eighteen days, and there was but one short day's march to Poona. So much alarmed had the ministers been for the event, that, by their agent at Bombay, they had offered fresh terms to the Governor before the army advanced. The commanding officer, Colonel Cockburn, when consulted, said, that he had not a doubt of the army's marching to Poona, but that our troops had not been used to retreat. However, the resolution was not to be altered. The army was formed into three divisions, encumbered with baggage,

gage, and moved off by night. They were attacked by numerous bodies of Marattas, but defended themselves with the utmost bravery, and sustained a loss comparatively small, if the length of the action and the numbers of the foe are considered. In the evening of that day, application was made to Nana and Sindia, for an undisturbed retreat of the army to Bombay; this was granted, upon the humiliating terms, that Salcot, and every other acquisition by the Bombay Government since the time of Mahderow, should be given up, and that orders should be sent to Colonel Goddard, to return with his army to Bengal. It is true the Committee * who governed that army, gave an express declaration, in writing, that they had not the power to bind the Supreme Council to the observance of these terms, and the Maratta Chiefs know it was so.

By this fatal check the honour of the British arms was tarnished, the cause of Ragobah Row given up; and, had the treaty been valid, all our conquests upon the Malabar coasts ceded to the Marattas. That the corps which took the field from Bombay, was strong enough to resist the united force of the Maratta empire, is beyond a doubt; that it was able to surmount every obstruction which the suddenly-collected army of the Marattas could have thrown in its way, is highly probable, (since two of our

* The Council of Bombay, on the 4th of November, appointed Mr. Carnac, Colonel Egerton, and Mr. Mostyn, a Committee to carry their plan into execution; this was called the Poona Committee. Mr. Mostyn died during the expedition.

battalions, with four field pieces, in February, 1780, put twenty thousand of their best troops under Madajee Sindia to the rout) but that by waiting for the junction of General Goddard's army, every possibility of a failure would have been avoided, cannot be disputed.

Colonel Goddard, when he was about three hundred miles from Surat, and the same distance from Poona, received an order from the Poona Committee to return to Bengal, without any notice being taken of the disaster, and retreat of the Bombay army; after mature reflection, he determined, notwithstanding this order, to advance towards Surat. On his march, a Vackel from the Maratta ministers arrived in his camp, with a copy of the convention. Colonel Goddard denied that the Committee had any authority over him, and said that he was directed to march to Bombay for the security of the Company's possessions against the designs of the French, and that he should prosecute his march. He effected his arrival at Surat on the 18th of February, 1779.

Sir Eyre Coote arrived in Bengal on the 27th of March, 1779; the Supreme Council was then complete, and the Governor General at the first assembly of the Board, although they had not received a full account of the transactions at Bombay, proposed that we should, if possible, conclude a lasting peace with the Marattas, upon the terms of Colonel Upton's treaty. His proposal was unanimously agreed to, and Colonel Goddard appointed the minister of this Government.

The Supreme Council were as unanimous in disavowing the convention of Worgaum, concluded by the Poona Committee; but, anxious for peace with the Marattas, and on a supposition that the gentlemen of Bombay might not heartily co-operate with them, Colonel Goddard was instructed to use his utmost endeavours to effect a reconciliation. All these resolutions were moved by the Governor General; no member of the Board proposed to avow the convention of Worgaum; upon what grounds therefore hath Mr. Hastings singly been charged as the author of the second Maratta war?

Colonel, now General, Goddard, when he had received his instructions, communicated his appointment to the ministers at Poona; and they deputed a Vackeel to negotiate a treaty of peace with him. Before this Vackeel arrived at Surat, Ragobah had made his escape from the officers of Sindia, who had charge of his person, and were conveying him to a place of confinement. He fled to Surat, and General Goddard agreed to give him personal protection; informing the ministers at Poona of this unexpected event. The Vackeel arrived at Surat — received our proposals — returned to Poona, and promised to forward a categorical answer in three weeks. After some delays, during which time General Goddard received intelligence that the ministers were negotiating a treaty with Hyder Ally, and making every preparation for war, the Vackeel returned to Surat, with the only terms on which the Marattas would consent to a peace. These were, that we should cede

Salfette to them, and deliver up the person of Rago-bah Row: Thus were the efforts of the Supreme Council disappointed. Can this disappointment be attributed to a want of zeal for an accommodation, either in the Governor General or General Goddard?

General Goddard at the same time received intelligence, that an alliance had been concluded at Poona, between Hyder Ally, the Marattas, Nizam Ally Cawn, and Moodajee Boosla. By the principal article of it, the Marattas, under Madajee Sindia and Tukajee Holkar, were to act against General Goddard in Guzerat; Hyder Ally was to invade the Carnatic; the Nizam the Northern Circars, and Moodajee Boosla, Bengal. The truth of this intelligence has since been fatally confirmed. The Nizam, the projector of the treaty, acted the part which he did, in revenge; for the Presidency of Fort St. George having concluded an alliance with his brother, Bazalet Jung, by which they acquired possession of the Guntoor Circar; and Hyder Ally Cawn very strongly expressed his disgust at our acquisition of that Circar. This business will doubtless be fully investigated; and it is foreign from my subject to take any farther notice of it here. Moodajee Boosla was very unwillingly drawn in to take a part against us. Of this there cannot be a doubt, as he regularly kept the Governor General informed of the designs which were formed against us, and purposely delayed the march of his army until the season of action should be past, with the hope that

in the last rains our differences with the Marattas would have been accommodated. The Nizam has hitherto been inactive, though the original projector of the confederacy.

The army at Surat was strengthened by detachments from Bombay and Fort St. George; and General Goddard was furnished with discretionary orders, should the treaty with the Marattas prove abortive. He took the field in December, 1779; and soon after concluded a treaty with Fatty Sing Guicawar, by which the extensive province of Guzerat was equally divided between the East-India Company and him. He immediately advanced towards Ahmedabad, the capital of that part of Guzerat which was in the possession of the Marattas. This place our troops took by storm; a conquest which added greatly to the splendour of our arms. In three months he entirely subdued the whole province. Madajee Sindia, who had assembled the Maratta forces, was marching with an intent to relieve Ahmedabad, nor supposing that we should so soon be in possession of it. General Goddard, leaving a garrison in this place, advanced towards the Maratta army to offer them battle; which, notwithstanding their great superiority of numbers, and the unfortunate event of the Bombay expedition, which must naturally have elated them, their General declined upon every occasion.

So anxious was General Goddard, knowing the good consequence of engaging the Maratta army, that on the 2d of April, 1780, he left his army on their

their ground, and advanced to storm the enemy's camp at the head of two hundred Europeans, ten companies of grenadier Sepoys, three battalions of Sepoys, two twelve and ten six-pounders, with the first regiment of Cavalry and the Candahar horse: with this force, so greatly inferior to the troops that retreated before the Maratta army the preceding year, he advanced, passed their principal guards, and instantly attacked the main body drawn up ready to receive him. Our artillery did great execution amongst their numerous cavalry, and in an hour from the commencement of the action they retreated, after a considerable loss; nor did a single horseman appear to molest our army in its return to camp. Every action of this campaign was equally glorious to our arms. Captain John Campbell, of the Bengal establishment, was detached with a foraging party to a considerable distance from their camp; and on his return with a large convoy of provisions, he was attacked by Sindia at the head of twenty thousand men, the flower of the Maratta army. Captain Campbell formed his detachment, consisting of two battalions of Sepoys, and four field pieces, to the best advantage, repulsed the Marattas, who lost between five and six hundred men, many of whom were killed by the fire of the flank companies of our line. Captain Campbell, after this remarkable action, joined General Goddard without the loss of a man, or of any part of his convoy. Lieutenant Welsh, of the Bengal establishment, was detached by General Goddard on the 3d of

May,

May, to surprize a body of six thousand Marattas; his force consisted of the first regiment of cavalry and a battalion of Sepoys. Lieutenant Welsh, when he had performed half his march, found, by calculating the time which remained, that if he waited for his infantry, he should not arrive before day break in the enemy's camp. He therefore came to the spirited resolution of advancing at the head of the cavalry only; with this force he entered the Maratta camp, and seized the enemy's cannon, which he turned upon them in their flight. The rout was general. The commanding officer and a great number of the Marattas were killed; and the artillery, bazar, ammunition, &c. fell into our hands. No victory could be more decisive: and this officer had the good fortune soon after to get possession of two forts, which intirely completed the conquest of Guzzerat.

Major Forbes, of the Bengal establishment, at the head of two battalions of Sepoys, effectually surprized and routed a body of 7000 Marattas, and with this action closed the campaign of 1780, both parties retiring to winter quarters for the rainy season. General Goddard commenced the present campaign by the conquest of the important fort of Bassein, and by a decisive victory over the Maratta army, which had been sent to relieve the place. The Marattas themselves deeply feel the loss of this important fortress, which they had taken from the Portuguese after a siege of two years.

I now return to the transactions in Bengal, where the measures proposed by Mr. Hastings were attended with the most brilliant advantages.

When the Governor General found, by General Goddard's dispatches, that we had no hopes of an accommodation with the Marattas, he concluded that the only mode of bringing them in one campaign to reasonable terms would be by attacking them in every quarter; for this purpose he entered into a treaty with the Rana of Gohid, an independent prince, whose country had been invaded by them. Mr. Hastings's motives for entering into this alliance were, to distress the Marattas, by making a considerable diversion in one of their best provinces, in conjunction with the Rana's forces, and, if possible, to acquire possession of the important fortress of Guzlier. But he had another view, which would effectually have humbled the Marattas, and in which he must have succeeded, if the distracted state of our Government, and the continual reports of his dismission from his station, had not deterred the Rajahs dependent upon them from entering into a closer connection with us.

The principal revenues and resources of the Marattas arise from the annual tribute paid to them by the Rajahs of Oudepore, Joudpore, Zeynagur, Bopaul, Narva, Bundlecund, &c. &c. These Princes, who take every opportunity of evading their payments, had now a fair opportunity of shaking off their dependance. And had the Government of Bengal been at liberty to have exerted itself at this time, or had not an idea of a change of men and measures unhappily been industriously propagated throughout Indostan,

Indostan, the Maratta war would have been concluded upon our own terms many months ago.

I will now proceed to relate the important consequences which were produced by our alliance with the Rāna of Gohid, small as his dominions may be. When the treaty was concluded, the Marattas were in possession of the best part of his country. Major Popham, at the head of 2000 Sepoys, 40 European artillery, a body of 120 horse, and 4 field pieces, six-pounders, marched to his assistance. With this little army, he in a few months drove the Marattas out of the Rāna's country, pursued them, and entirely conquered one of their provinces, producing an annual revenue of six lacks of rupees. In the course of this service he took several forts, beat up the Maratta camp; nor were all the efforts of above 15,000 Marattas able to oppose the success of his gallant little army. The most important action still remains to be related. When Major Popham's detachment had cantoned for the rains, Mr. Hastings proposed to him to make an attempt upon Gualier. He knew this place to be so strong, that it never could be taken by regular approaches; and he knew too, that the enemy, confident in the natural strength of the place, would be more liable to be surprized. The importance of the conquest may be well conceived when it is known, that by all ranks of men in all ages, this place has been denominated, The impregnable Fortress of Gualier. As such, Colonel Dow speaks of it in several parts of his History of Indostan.

In a country where we retain our authority, by an opinion which the natives have, not only of our superior genius for war, but also our good fortune, such a conquest, at such a time, would be equal to the most decisive victory in the field. I believe there was not a man in Bengal who differed in opinion with Mr. Hastings as to the importance of this place; but I well remember when the treaty with the Rana of Gohid was concluded, the impossibility of our getting possession of Gualier was frequently mentioned. Major Popham, who by the surprize of this place, has acquired immortal honour in India, had the good fortune to receive some important information from a party of Mewattes, who had found means to enter the place by night at different times.

He employed spies to examine the place where these men had entered, and from their report conceived the design to be possible. In compliance with Mr. Hastings's repeated solicitations, and guided by his own judgment, he made every preparation for the attempt with the utmost secrefy, only two persons being privy to it. The night before the execution of it, he wrote to the Governor General, informed him that the attempt was to be made early the next morning, and he hoped in case of failure, that Mr. Hastings would do him the justice to say, it was at his desire that he had undertaken an enterprize, which, if it failed, would be denominated rash and impracticable; if it succeeded, would redound as much to the honour of the Governor General, by

whose advice it was undertaken, as of those by whom it was executed. The success was equal to the spirit and prudence of the action ; it was taken on the 4th of August, 1780, and that with the trifling loss of 20 Sepoys wounded.

It is impossible to describe the despondency of the Marattas upon this important event. The whole country adjoining to Gualier was immediately evacuated by their troops, and our military reputation proportionably raised. This was the favourable moment for us, and if Mr. Hastings could have profited by it, as he wished to have done, the power of the Marattas in India would have sunk at once. Mr. Hastings, previous to the capture of Gualier, had proposed to form a strong detachment in Gohid, for the purpose of advancing into the province of Malwa, the country of Sindia, the Maratta general. In this the Governor General was over ruled; although he had every reason to believe, that in the conduct of that branch of administration he was to meet with no opposition. If the detachment had been formed, as Mr. Hastings had proposed, the capture of Gualier ensured us the utmost success in its operations.

General Goddard had earnestly pressed the Governor General and Council to invade the province of Malwa, which would have diverted the attention of Sindia from Guzerat ; and one campaign would have finished the war with honour and advantage on our side. An event which no Member of the Board more earnestly wished to see accomplished than

Mr.

Mr. Hastings; particularly as Hyder Ally Cawn had, in July, 1780, invaded the Carnatic, where our forces were utterly unprepared to receive him.

On the 19th of September an express arrived in Calcutta from the Secret Committee of Fort St. George, informing the Supreme Council that the flower of their army had been cut off or taken prisoners by Hyder Ally, and that Sir Hector Munro, with the part of the forces under his command, had retreated to the mount with the loss of his baggage and part of his artillery. This intelligence was accompanied by advice that a considerable French fleet, with land forces on board, were on their way to India.

This important intelligence left little room for deliberation, and at the first meeting of the Board, the Governor General proposed that Sir Eyre Coote should be requested to take the command of the army at Madras. That a reinforcement of Europeans should be sent to the coast by sea, with a supply of fifteen lacks of rupees; and that a large detachment of Sepoys should be formed to march to the Carnatic as soon as the season would permit. That an instant offer of peace should be made to the Marattas upon terms so advantageous to them, as almost to ensure their acceptance of them. The season was so far advanced that the embarkation of troops would be attended with difficulty and danger. But the Governor General, justly considering that every

risque was to be run, when probably the very existence of the Company would depend upon their arrival, despised every inferior consideration. Mr. Francis opposed the embarkation of the troops, and would only agree to seven lack of rupees being sent from Bengal. However, all these motions were carried by the majority: and Sir Eyre Coote, with six hundred and forty Europeans, fifteen lacks of rupees, and a great supply of provisions arrived at Madras, in less than two months, computed from the return of the army under Sir Hector Munro, at the mount on the 14th of September, to the arrival of the last ship of the fleet, the Duke of Kingston, at Fort St. George, on the 5th of November. It will undoubtedly reflect great honour upon Mr. Hastings and Sir Eyre Coote, that they had spirit enough to afford such extraordinary aids to the Presidency of Fort St. George, at a season in which the navigation from Bengal to Madras had hitherto been interdicted on account of the dangers which attended it.

I have related as briefly and as clearly as I was able, the rise and progress of the Maratta war, from the 12th of December, 1777, to the close of the year 1780. Upon what ground or suggestion this war can be attributed to Mr. Hastings, let every man judge who reads this account.

The occasion of the war was planned and executed without the knowledge or previous consent of the Governor General, who had another participation in

it than by providing, by an extraordinary exertion, for the support of the measures undertaken by the Presidency of Bombay if they succeeded, and for its preservation if they failed. The Court of Directors have warmly approved of the exertions made by the Government of Bengal. Colonel Goddard arrived seasonably for the preservation of Bombay, and for the redemption of the national honour, which had without it been irretrievably lost. Our successes in every part, after the Marattas had rejected all reasonable terms of accommodation, gave the Governor General the strongest hopes of speedily terminating it by such advantages as should have amply compensated the Company for the expences which had attended it, and the calamities with which it had commenced. In the midst of our successes, another and more interesting occasion called for the exertion of the Government of Bengal. The preservation of Fort St. George depended upon their resolutions. The misfortunes upon the coast cannot be attributed to Mr. Hastings. If the general opinion is to have weight, the invasion of the Carnatic might have been prevented by the assembly of our army in the month of June. If the confession of the Nizam to Mr. Hoiland may be credited, (and it is confirmed by the evidence of the most public notoriety) that invasion was the sole effect of a confederacy formed at his instigation, and dictated by his resentments of the infringements made by the Select Committee of Fort St. George on his rights obtained by the treaty

treaty subsisting between him and the Company, and his natural apprehension of hostilities, intended by that government against him.

When Mr. Hastings proposed to conclude a treaty of peace with the Marattas, he recommended to the Board to form the treaty in Calcutta, to send it executed by the Supreme Council, to Moodajee Boosla, the Rajah of Berar, who had repeatedly offered himself as mediator between our Government and the Marattas. This treaty was rejected, and the reason was obvious; Hyder Ally Cawn had cut off a third of our army. He had taken Arcot, when he was proclaimed Nabob of the Carnatic. He had boasted, that he would prevent the English army from moving from the Mount, and that he was to be joined in a month by 3000 French regulars from the Islands, when he would commence the siege of Fort St. George. The French fleet, six sail of the line and five frigates, appeared on the coast of Coromandel. Under these circumstances, the Marattas deeming our situation a desperate one, rejected all treaty, except upon the most disgraceful terms to us.

Sir Eyre Coote took the field on the 23d of January, 1781. On his march to Pondicherry, he repeatedly offered battle to Hyder Ally Cawn.

His detachments were upon all occasions successful, against every superiority of numbers. The army under his command was the finest that ever took the field in India, in point of discipline and numbers, and completely provided with artillery and military stores. The men were eager to revenge the late defeat

feat and destruction of their companions. The French fleet, after appearing off Madras, on the 29th of January, went off without even making an attempt to destroy the ships in that road, in which they must have succeeded. The fleet had not a single soldier on board, except their marines, and on a report that Sir Edward Hughes was returning from Bombay to the coast of Coromandel, quitted the coast on the 16th of February, and returned to the islands. In addition to the army under the command of Sir Eyre Coote, Colonel Pearse was advancing from Bengal with ten battalions of Sepoys and twenty pieces of cannon. This force would arrive in the neighbourhood of Madras in the month of June.

The Marattas at the commencement of this campaign, had been defeated in a general action by General Goddard, who the day after took the fort of Bassein. Lieutenant Colonel Camac, advancing at the head of twelve battalions of Sepoys to the province of Malwa, has had the good fortune to gain a complete victory against an army of 30,000 men, commanded by Sindia in person, the effect of which must be greatly beneficial to General Goddard's designs. Gualier was garrisoned by our troops, and by that means a safe communication was preserved with the dominions of our ally the Vizier. Our forces in Bengal were so stationed, as to prevent all danger from an invasion, should it be attempted. These favourable circumstances make an honourable peace with the Marattas a probable event.

In this review of the rise and progress of the Maratta war, let it be remembered, that the main design of marching an army across India, was not to assist the Presidency of Bombay in the execution of their original plan, but to support them in the consequences of it to us, and to protect the interests of the East-India Company from the effects of a connection well known to be formed between the ruling member of the Maratta state and the avowed agent of the King of France. General Goddard very opportunely arrived at Surat for the preservation of Bombay. The Governor General, who saw in as strong a light as any other member of the Board, the disadvantages even of a successful war with the Marattas, (however great the necessity might be of retrieving our military reputation) should the operations be continued beyond one campaign, proposed to them the most equitable terms of peace; and in a letter which he himself drew up to the Committee at Bombay, the Supreme Council observe, " Having given full powers to Colonel Goddard to negotiate and conclude a peace with the Marattas, we have only to repeat, that we look to the issue of that commission as our primary object, and the termination of all our political views on your side of India, if it prove successful." To Colonel Goddard, the Board observe, " Our first desire is to obtain peace."

When Ragonaut Row had escaped from Madajee Sindia, and had joined General Goddard, who consented to give him personal protection, the Supreme Council

Council approve of its being continued to him, provided he shall "not attempt to defeat the effect of " your négociations, to which you are to give your " entire attention without regard to any other consider- " ation." With such proofs of Mr. Hastings's sincere disposition to accommodate our differences with the Marattas, what are the grounds to suppose he was less inclined to a pacification than Mr. Francis, or any other member of the Board ? The Governor General was not at all involved in the disgrace which the gentlemen of Bombay had incurred by their ill-timed expedition ; on the contrary, the Court of Directors had conveyed to him, by an express over land, their approbation of the part which he had taken in their affairs. The answer of the Poona Durbar to our proposals was conveyed in few words. " They would only consent to a peace on " these conditions : That we should give up the per- " son of Ragobah, and cede the island of Salsette to " them." Was it even proposed by any member of the Supreme Council to purchase a peace by such concessions ? It was not. The war was therefore a war of necessity on our part ; and from this moment it ought to have been prosecuted with the utmost vigour. Thwarted and opposed as the Governor General was, the brilliant successes which have attended our arms will fully prove what our Government when united may be capable of.

That I might not break in upon the narrative of the Maratta war, I have passed over the other transactions of Government during that period. The

resolution to commence hostilities against the French, on the 7th of July, 1778, before any regular advices of a rupture had been received from England, reflects honour upon every member of the Supreme Council in proportion to the responsibility which each incurred by so spirited a measure. The celerity with which two ships of 40 guns each were fitted out, and joined Sir Edward Vernon before Pondicherry, arriving there against the monsoon, in less than two months from the day when they were ordered to be equipped, the plan formed for the defence of the river, when the destination of the Toulon fleet was unknown, the reinforcements ordered to be raised for the army, the disposition of our forces, and the assembly of the militia, are substantial proofs of the attention of the Governor General and Council to the preservation of the valuable empire committed to their charge, and the spirit which animated all ranks of men living under their Government.

Why the French missed so favourable an opportunity of attacking us on the Malabar coast we know not, but it would have been a very poor satisfaction to his country if Mr. Hastings had stopped the march of the army destined for the preservation of Bombay, at so critical a period, either on account of the expence attending it, or to add still more to the security of Bengal, already well secured, if that place had been attacked the following year. The majority of the supreme Council therefore determined at this time, that their army should advance; and the Governor General had the strongest and best founded

founded expectations of carrying the projected alliance with Moodajee Boosla into execution ; which was intended effectually to preclude the French nation from territorial possessions in every part of India.

The temporary agreement between the Governor General and Mr. Francis, and the extraordinary event it produced, are facts, the elucidation of which is disagreeable. Certain it is some agreement was made as to the conduct of the war, as certain that Mr. Hastings, as well before as in the meetings which he had with Mr. Francis, insisted, that as the whole responsibility of the war with the Marattas was, by Mr. Francis and Mr. Wheler, thrown upon him, he should have the entire conduct of it, and as certain that the persons in Mr. Hastings's confidence understood that was agreed to.

The Governor General's plan for carrying on the war was confessedly the best that could have been proposed. The operations of a small army the last campaign had put us in possession of an extensive country, had considerably added to our military reputation ; and during the rains, that very season in which Mr. Francis contended nothing could be done, Major Popham took the important fortress of Gualier. By Mr. Francis's opposition to the Governor General's plan, our army, which was formed the last campaign, was distressed for pay, and continued inactive, when it might have moved with great effect : that army which must have so completely divided the forces and the attention of the Marattas, and made us successful in every quarter,

The plan which Mr. Hastings proposed for carrying on the Maratta war exactly corresponded with one drawn up by an excellent officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Upton, of whom Mr. Francis himself had the highest opinion. This gentleman had travelled to Poona by land, and his sentiments were certainly a strong confirmation of the propriety of the Governor General's propositions. The great expences of the war are doubtless to be lamented; but there are seasons when great expences are absolutely necessary; nor can a Government, like ours, hope to be secure, if in time of war we are contented to guard our frontier only. This we must do at a considerable expence, and with the loss of reputation; but by invading the dominions of our enemies, we have kept them at home, we have deprived them of resources for carrying on the war, we have infused such a degree of spirit into the native troops in our service, that they look upon themselves as invincible when headed by British officers; and the conquests which we have made would have amply repaid us for all our expences, had the invasion of the Carnatic not taken place.

The Governor General would have had no difficulty in extending the influence of the Company through all the countries now dependent upon the Marattas, if the native powers of India had had the same opinion of the continuance of his authority, as was universally entertained of his superior abilities and good fortune. But unfortunately, Mr. Hastings, notwithstanding his utmost efforts, could never

ver efface those ideas which had so generally been conceived from Benares to Dehly, and in the Decan, of his speedy removal from the Government of Bengal.

Before Sir Eyre Coote's arrival, it was universally given out by the friends of Mr. Francis, that he would undoubtedly take a decided part against Mr. Hastings. These declarations so often repeated, made a deep impression upon our allies, and were attended with very serious consequences. I will mention one that immediately occurs to me.

When our military establishment was considerably increased, in consequence of the war with France, Mr. Hastings thought it reasonable that Cheyt Sing, the Raja of Benares, and a vassal of the Company, should pay a proportion of an expence incurred for our common defence. This he fixed at five lacks of rupees per annum, and the Raja was with some difficulty prevailed upon to advance this sum, but he positively refused to continue the payment beyond the first year; and in this resolution he was confirmed by a knowledge of Mr. Francis's sentiments, who disapproved of any compulsion being used for the continuance of the payment. The intrigues of the Raja's Yackeel in Calcutta, previous to the General's arrival, were very well known; but as Sir Eyre Coote supported the authority of the Governor General, the Raja was obliged, not only to pay five lacks of rupees for another year, but in addition to it, the expences incurred by the march of two battalions to Benares, for the purpose of enforcing the payment,

payment, if he should continue obstinate. If the Rajah had not received the most positive assurances from his agent at Calcutta, that Mr. Francis was on the point of succeeding to the Government, he never would have reduced Mr. Hastings to the necessity of taking so violent a measure, for the support of his own authority and the Company's interests.

If the expectation of a change in Bengal had been productive of no effects more detrimental to the public service than the contemptible opposition of the Raja of Benares, it had been fortunate; but independent of the great relaxation of Government in our own provinces, which was, and always must be the consequence of it, such an expectation very essentially interfered with the only plan by which the Maratta war could be brought to a speedy and successful termination. The Rajas of Jaynagur, Narva, Bundlecund, &c. were all, I can affirm from the best authority, eager to throw off their dependence upon the Marattas; the slightest assistance from us would have enabled them to do it. The successful operations of Major Popham's little army has very probably produced this effect, if a peace is not yet concluded.

Our political influence was extended immediately upon Mr. Hastings's accession to the chair. Every power in India has an agent in Calcutta; and these men regularly transmit to their principals the intelligence of the day. Influenced by the intelligence thus received, they have universally dreaded, and expected Mr. Hastings's removal, and have been deterred

detected from taking part with so unsteady a Government.

Mr. Francis will excuse me for observing that he is responsible for the fatal consequence which followed, from the opinion of a change in the Government being so universal. The paragraphs of the general letters, from the direction which reflected most severely upon Mr. Hastings, were industriously circulated; Mr. Francis, in the most unreserved manner, expressed his certainty of succeeding him in a few months, nor could all the efforts of Mr. Middleton at Lucknow, or Mr. Graham at Benares, obviate the bad effects which such positive declarations produced throughout Indostan. I affirm, nothing can be so detrimental to the interests of the British nation in India, as a divided or unsettled administration in Bengal; and whatever system the Court of Directors may adopt in future, or whom-ever they may think proper to employ, they ought to give the ruling members every public support in their power. The hands of Government should be strengthened by every possible means. Prosperity attended the confidence which they placed in Mr. Hastings; and reverse of fortune, the diminution, or more properly the annihilation of his authority.

I now beg leave to offer a few remarks upon the state of our affairs in India.

Our situation is indeed so very alarming, that there are many men who will believe, and many more who will affect to believe them irretrievable; I must confess that it will require all the abilities, the integrity, and the firmness of the Governor General, with

with every possible degree of support that can be given from home, to restore Bengal to its former prosperity ; but that Mr. Hastings will effect this, if he is treated with that confidence which his great and important services entitle him to expect, I have not the smallest doubt.

What was our situation in Bengal, when Mr. Hastings arrived there in 1772 ; and what is it at this time ? To bring this subject to one point of view, I must recapitulate what I have already observed. At the former period, the Company's debt at interest was above one hundred and twenty lacks. The Court of Directors the season before had been drawn upon for one hundred and twenty lacks. There was no prospect of providing future investments but by an increase of the bond debt, as our civil and military expences were barely defrayed by the annual revenues. In one year only what a change was effected. The alliance with Sujah Dowlah brought such an ample supply of treasure into Bengal, that every service was fully provided for, and the bond-debt reduced. Until this period, our foreign connections only served to accelerate the ruin of our provinces, by draining them of the little specie that remained in them.

No one good effect was experienced from our alliance with Sujah Dowlah, before Mr. Hastings's accession to the chair ; an entire brigade kept at Allahabad, which was paid by the exportation of silver from Bengal, was a ruin.

A very considerable sum was saved by the reduction of the stipends paid to the Nabob and his ministers.

ministers. In this particular, where the interest of the Company was concerned, Mr. Hastings paid a pointed attention to the orders of the Court of Directors. At the season when the Supreme Council arrived, our investment was so considerably increased, that two extra ships, the Anson and the Northumberland, were sent home. The following year we obtained a clear additional revenue of twenty-four lacs from Benares, and the expence of at least a third of our army was defrayed by the Vizier. These beneficial advantages are the result of Mr. Hastings's treaty of 1773; a treaty which the majority of the Supreme Council decried in all its parts the first month of their arrival. China, Bombay, and Madras, have been supplied with treasure to a very considerable amount; and the annual investment from 1774 to 1779, was considerably above a million sterling each year. The bond-debt was entirely paid off, and a large balance of cash in our treasury. I had forgot to mention the erection of public granaries, by which the return of famine, which so depopulated that country, is totally prevented.

A series of events which I have already related brought on the Maratta war; a war in Europe obliged us to increase our military establishment very considerably, to provide a marine force, to reinforce Sir Edward Vernon, and for the defence of the river. These exertions were attended with additional expence, but they were absolutely necessary, and have been fully approved of at home. The French, contrary to their usual policy, missed the

fairest opportunity which they ever could have had to regain their influence in India. Why they were so remiss we know not; but what would Mr. Hastings have deserved, had he taken no steps to counteract their intrigues at Poona, and in consequence of them, two regiments and a hundred French officers had landed at Choule. When our successes against the Marattas gave us every reason to expect an honourable peace, the Carnatic was invaded. This was a fresh demand upon Bengal for men, money, and provisions. The exertions of the Governor General and Sir Eyre Coote, have saved Fort St. George. After so many great drains from our treasury, after supporting an expensive war against the Marattas, and affording Bombay such effectual assistance in cash, provisions, and stores, after doubling our investment for many years, that debt which, when Mr. Hastings came to the chair, was above one hundred and twenty lacs, was, on the 15th of December last, only sixty-six lacs of current rupees, and we had eighty-eight lacs of goods in the Company's warehouses.

I have already stated my reasons for supposing that we are now at peace with the Marattas. An accommodation with Hyder Ally, or his entire overthrow, must soon follow. When these events have taken place, our military establishment may be considerably reduced; the Presidency of Bombay must support its expences from the revenues arising from their late acquisitions. The Carnatic cannot recover itself for many years. Before its invasion, the country was almost ruined, and the Nabob either wanted,

wanted, or pretended to want, money for his private expences.

The Government of Bengal must supply Bombay and Madras with cash, as it has constantly done, if their own resources are inadequate to their disbursements. And from the revenues of Bengal must the interest of their bond debts be paid. This I contend can easily be done, if some care is taken to prevent Bengal from being unnecessarily drained of its specie, and if foreign trade is properly encouraged. To effect these points, the Court of Directors must fix upon some equitable mode, by which the private fortunes of their servants can be remitted to England. At present they are under an absolute necessity either of sending their fortunes home in cash, which is ruinous to Bengal, or of lending their money to foreigners, by which means the Company's sales in England must be essentially injured.

If foreigners should once be under the necessity of bringing bullion to Bengal to purchase cargoes, such a flow of treasure to our exhausted provinces would amply compensate for a trifling diminution of the public sales in England; and if the Company's servants are restricted from lending money to foreigners, they must either bring bullion to Bengal, or relinquish the trade altogether. I can say, from my own knowledge, that it is from necessity, not choice, the Company's servants supply them with cash. But an equitable mode of remittance once fixed by the Directors, dismission from the service should be the punishment of any man who should lend money to foreigners or to foreign companies.

Perhaps the Court of Directors do not know the extent to which this trade is carried on. Four Portuguese ships have sailed from Bengal this year. I came to Lisbon in one of them. Her cargo was valued at five lacs of rupees. The others were still more valuable. Some of these ships were taken up in India; the captains and owners borrowed as much money as they wanted to purchase both ships and cargoes, on the following terms: — The lenders to receive 12 per cent. interest, and two shillings for each current rupee at Lisbon, three months after the arrival of the ship. Prejudicial as this trade may appear to the Directors, it is not half so ruinous to Bengal as the remittance of fortunes in silver would be. The Dutch and Danish Companies, as well as individuals of both nations, have borrowed large sums last year, and the season preceding, upon the terms above mentioned.

The trade to Suez should, if possible, be again opened; it is advantageous to Bengal in every point of view, and can never interfere with the Company's sales in England. Mr. Hastings deserves the highest credit for his encouragement of this trade, and for his attempts to establish a regular communication with our native country by this route. We owe the early capture of Pondicherry entirely to it.

I own I depart from the line of my profession when I presume to hazard opinions upon commercial subjects; but as I have been fifteen years in Bengal, and have not been an unconcerned spectator of the various changes which have happened in that time,

I may

I may be excused for declaring my sentiments upon a subject of such importance.

Arts, agriculture, and commerce, have greatly increased since my first arrival in India. The riches of Bengal are its manufactures. For them there will always be a market; and while we increase in population, we must increase our manufactures. Mr. Hastings, it must be recollectcd, succeeded to the Government at a most unfavourable period. The loss by the dreadful famine of 1770 has been estimated at four millions of people; and from my own observations in various parts of Bengal, I do not think this an exaggerated account.

However I may be mistaken when I speak of trade, I will venture to affirm, that our affairs in Bengal are much more alarming in appearance than in reality.

Let us suppose that by the time the war in India is at an end, and a general peace has been established in Europe, the bond debt in Bengal amounts to 200 lacks of rupees*. This is not so large a sum as was in fact owing when Mr. Hastings came to the chair. The bond debt was then 120, and the Directors had been drawn upon for above 100 lacks of rupees only the season before. I hope it will be recollectcd that this great debt was contracted in times of the *most profound peace*; and the greatest part of it even before

* I cannot avoid desiring the attention of the public to this part of my Narrative. It was written on my passage from Bengal to Lisbon in 1781. What I have ventured to foretel, has in a great measure happened — We have peace in India, and our bond debt in Bengal is 199 lacks.

the famine. Dreadful as was that calamity, its effects were more severely felt after Mr. Hastings's accession to the Government than at the time it happened. It is a fact that the collections in the year of the famine, and the year after, were higher than in either of the two preceding ones.

The interest of 200 lacks of rupees will be 16 lacks a year. All our establishments upon a peace will be considerably reduced ; and if the Governor General is properly supported, the Government of Bengal will acquire a vigour, to the want of which, and not to the Maratta war, we owe our present misfortunes.

To pay the interest of this debt, let us examine our funds, and compare them with those of 1772. I will suppose the actual collections from Bengal, Bahar, and Orixa, to be only what they were at that period.

The savings under the different heads of tribute to the King, stipends to the Nabob, his ministers and dependants, are at least 50 lacks of rupees a year.

The Vizier pays 70 lacks of rupees annually towards our military expences.

We shall receive annually from Cheyt Sing, 24 lacks of rupees.

When our dominions and our influence, at least an influence advantageous to the Company, were bounded by the banks of the Carumnassa, our military expences were 105 lacks of rupees a year.

Our connection with Oude, now so profitable, was a most disadvantageous one before Mr. Hastings arrived in Bengal. To the Company it was ruinous, although

although it answered the interested purposes of certain individuals perfectly well.

Can one good reason be given for the very curious deputation to Sujah Dowlah in 1768, against the opinion of Mr. Verelst, at that time the Governor of Bengal ? or for keeping the third brigade at Allahabad until the middle of the year 1769, at the Company's expence ?

The transactions of that period are worthy the public attention — I may enlarge upon them hereafter.

At a peace our military expences can and will be reduced to 110 lacks of rupees a year.

The interest of our debt, supposing it 200 lacks, will be 16 lacks a year.

When Mr. Hastings came to the Government, the Company owed something more than 120 lacks.

Upon comparing the accounts of 1771, and they are applicable to a former period, with those at a so-much-wished-for peace, the balance will be 133 lacks a year in favour of the Company, as appears by the following statement :

EXPENSES in 1771.

	Rupees.
Military, — — — — —	105
Interest of bond debt, — — — — —	10
Paid in tribute, stipends, &c. but retrenched by Mr. Hastings, — — — — —	50
Total — — — — —	165

EXPENCES at a PEACE.

	Rupees.
Military, — — — — —	110
Interest of debt, — — — — —	16
Total	126

Credit in favour of the Company.

Difference of disbursements, — — — — —	39
Paid by the Vizier, — — — — —	70
By the Raja of Benares, — — — — —	24
Total, — —	133

While arts, manufactures, and commerce, are encouraged in Bengal; while the natives continue happy under our Government, and attached to it as the great body of the people are; while population increases, as it has done the last seven years, Bengal must be a most valuable country to Great Britain; but it can only yield its tribute by the increase of the annual investment.

Mr. Hastings has been very severely charged with disobedience of orders—Upon this subject I must add a few words. I do not mean to justify the Governor General's conduct by pleading precedent for it, yet I am reduced to the disagreeable necessity of contrasting it with the conduct of his predecessors in power in Bengal.

I affirm

I affirm that it had long been reported, Mr. Hastings was to be dismissed the service, that Mr. Francis was to succeed him; and the reinstatement of Messrs. Bristow, Fowke, and Mahomed Reza Cawn, were connected with Mr. Francis's accession to the Government. This report, circulated for months throughout Indostan, obliged Mr. Hastings to adopt measures which were by no means agreeable to the natural humanity of his temper, or to that regard to the just claims of individuals which he is known to possess. He assigned his reasons to the Directors for keeping them out of office, and if they were not approved, he of course expected to be dismissed from the service. To those who served in India I appeal, whether it is not absolutely necessary to strengthen the hands of Government by every possible means, and to impress the natives with an idea of its stability; That the reinstatement of Mr. Bristow, Mr. Fowke, and Mahomed Reza Cawn, would have had a contrary effect is universally known.

When General Richard Smith was Commander in Chief of the Company's forces in Bengal, and third member of the Secret Committee and the Council, he wrote the following letter to the Secret Committee, 24th November 1767, and forced Mr. Verelst to do an act of greater severity than Mr. Hastings was ever guilty of in the whole course of his political life. I must affirm here, that the East-India Company was saddled with the expence of an establishment of a Supreme Court of Judicature, in consequence of the discussions which this famous letter produced.

" The nature of the intelligence transmitted from
 " Calcutta to Sujah Dowlah is without limits. The
 " Nabob is almost as well acquainted with the Par-
 " liamentary proceedings as I am; how far the im-
 " portance and dignity of the Company, and the
 " weight and influence of administration is lessened
 " in his esteem by such communication, may be easily
 " conceived. Whilst a Vackel is so ready and so
 " sure a channel to communicate intelligence, few
 " men will be found so hardy as to maintain a direct
 " correspondence with the Nabob; but there is a
 " man who has obliquely offered so great an insult
 " to our President, that was I present at the Board, I
 " would move for the exertion of our authority to
 " its utmost extent to free the settlement from so
 " dangerous an inhabitant; I mean Mr. Bolts; and
 " the inclosed copy of a letter to Mr. Zentil, where
 " he asserts an absolute falsehood, which tends to
 " lessen that *essential dignity and necessary influence of*
 " our President, is surely deserving of your severest
 " resentment."

I approve highly of General Richard Smith's arguments; if he had known how *the essential dignity and necessary influence of Mr. Hastings*, would have been affected by carrying the Director's orders into execution respecting Mr. Bristow, he would upon his own principles have concurred in the disobedience of them, had he been a member of the Supreme Council in December, 1779.

Three poor Armenians, the trading agents of Mr. Bolts, a keen trader himself, who perhaps wanted

to come in for some share of the plunder of Oude and Benares, were afterwards seized, and treated with too much rigour. Most men in Bengal attributed General Smith's conduct to private motives. It is strictly justifiable upon public grounds; however I must add in this place, and I can prove it, that our connection with Sujah Dowlah at that time was ruinous to the East-India Company, in as great a degree as it was advantageous to a few individuals in power.

The Directors' most positive orders have been repeatedly disobeyed or evaded during my residence in Bengal. Two very particular instances I will now mention.

As soon as the Court of Directors were informed of the salt monopoly of 1765, they sent positive orders to Bengal to abolish it immediately on the receipt of their letter. In defiance of this order, the monopoly was continued almost two years longer, and the profits arising from it were divided amongst the members of the Council, General Richard Smith (Commander in Chief at that time) and the principal civil and military servants in Bengal.

The Directors had positively prohibited their servants in Bengal from drawing upon them except for a certain amount, and a rate of exchange much more favourable than the present. Yet by a resolution of the Council, in October, 1769, bills were drawn upon them at a very unfavourable exchange for the Company, to the amount of one million and sixty thousand pounds sterling. I affirm that three-

fourths of the money paid into the treasury in Calcutta might have been borrowed upon bond until the Directors' pleasure was known.

Let these instances of disobedience be compared with the charges brought against Mr. Hastings.

I will here quote General Richard Smith's sentiments upon the subject of disobedience of orders.

In his minute of the 25th of September, 1769, when he proposed opening the Company's treasury, and to grant bills upon the Directors, he says,

“ Although the Court of Directors' orders are strong
 “ in prohibition, yet I think we shall be *fully warranted* to deviate from those orders, and I do not
 “ think I should perform my duty to the Company
 “ as a member of their administration, if I did not
 “ enter this my opinion upon the public records.”

Upon another occasion, 24th November, 1767, General Richard Smith writes to the Secret Committee, whose orders he was bound to obey in the same degree as Mr. Hastings is those of the Directors.

“ My zeal for the welfare of the state I serve
 “ would, on occasions of great emergency, induce
 “ me not only to hazard my commission, but even
 “ subject my life and honour to the sentence of a
 “ general court-martial, rather than the *public service*
 “ should suffer by delay. Whenever I act *contrary*
 “ to their orders, it is not that I entertain the most
 “ distant idea of disobedience or *independence*, but
 “ from a conviction that at this distance from the *Presidency*, their orders and the welfare of the state may
 “ happen, they have happened, to be incompatible; and
 “ whenever

" whenever I take upon me to deviate from their orders,
 " it is not from independent authority I presume, because
 " I know I am totally responsible to them for such a
 " deviation."

This is the language of a sensible man. It is manly language. It is the language of Mr. Hastings; but in the Governor General's case, the arguments operate with ten-fold force, when we consider the situations of Mr. Hastings and General Richard Smith; the former could only receive answers from his superiors in fifteen or eighteen months, the latter in as many days.

I will now mention a few essential points in which Mr. Hastings pointedly obeyed the orders of the Directors. He employed Nundcomar by their orders.

He reduced the Nabob's stipend from thirty-two to fifteen lacks of rupees. He abolished nominal pensions to a large amount. He suspended Mahomed Reza Cawn from his office; he brought him to a trial before the Council for his former conduct; and to the justice, the impartiality, and the attention of Mr. Hastings, Mahomed Reza Cawn has always declared, he was indebted for his life, which the villainy of Nundcomar would have deprived him of. In November, 1773, Mr. Hastings received the thanks of the Directors for his great attention to their orders, and for his other eminent services.

Soon after the majority of the Supreme Council arrived in Bengal, they asserted that Mr. Hastings had made 40 lacks of rupees, or 400,000l. from the revenues

revenues of Bengal, in less than three years. The despicable character of the man on whose information this declaration was grounded, the well-known moderation of Mr. Hastings, his active and vigorous administration, the state of his private fortune at that time, or at present, which any man may know that chooses to inquire, are solid proofs of the falsity and the folly of this assertion. Are the great servants of the Company who preceded Mr. Hastings in high stations, although not in the chair, willing to put their integrity to this test; will they declare the amount of their private fortunes?

I do affirm, that if public and repeatedly asserted declarations have any weight, the amount of the private fortunes of three gentlemen, of high station, who left Bengal in the course of the year 1769, or in January 1770, equalled the amount of all the private fortunes that have been accumulated during Mr. Hastings's government of ten years, from the revenues of Bengal, Bahar, and Orixa, by the civil and military servants of the Company.

If we were to judge from vague reports, what character could be sheltered from calumny. I can recollect perfectly well, that in the year 1768 and 1769, it was universally said in Bengal, that a mint was established at Allahabad; that the good rupees, which were so absurdly sent from Bengal and Bahar to that place, were all recoined into base rupees, called Vizier; that our troops sustained a very heavy loss by being obliged to receive their pay in this base money. That twenty-six lacks of sicca rupees were

annually

annually sent from Bengal, for the payment of the King's tribute, but that his Majesty actually received it in vizier rupees; and that a very considerable share of the profits arising from this coinage, which was said to be unauthorized by the Governor and Council, centered in the Commander in Chief, General Richard Smith. It does not, however, follow, that this was the fact. I have been long enough in India to know, that men who are deprived of the opportunity of making money themselves, are very apt to exaggerate when they state the advantages of their superiors. It is very possible to investigate this matter thoroughly; and I must observe, that Mr. Hastings has been accused of peculation upon much more slender ground.

Upon the subject of presents received, which was one of the modes by which Mr. Hastings was accused of having made the enormous sum of 400,000l. I shall make but one observation:—That, upon a reference to the Governor General's Durbar charges, it will be found he has brought to the Company's credit the sums which he received, and has drawn the amount of the presents he made from the Treasury. This rule was observed, I believe, by his predecessors. In the Consultations of the 8th of December, 1769, and since printed in the Reports of the Secret Committee of 1773, I find, that General Richard Smith made the Mogul, Shaw Allum, a present to the amount of 2000l. sterling, *when his Majesty honoured him with a visit to Sujah Dowlah, Bulwant Sing, and a string of et ceteras.* Presents, for

for which he received from the Company one lack twenty-four thousand six hundred and six Souaut rupees, or 16,000l. sterling. I do not see the presents which he received in return, brought to account; but if the invariable custom and usage of the country at that time to men of high rank and station was dispensed with, out of delicacy to his feelings, and he received no presents from the King, Sujah Dowlah, &c. his liberality was a very unnecessary waste of the public money.

The execution of Nundcomar has been again brought forward. The ingenious *English* writer of *A Letter from Calcutta* has, without any foundation, quoted the most respectable authority for calling his death a murder. My observations upon it will be very short.

Nundcomar was employed by Mr. Hastings, on his first arrival in Bengal, at the express desire of the Court of Directors. Mr. Hastings's choice of the man excited very general surprise, as the cause was not known. Nundcomar's villany was detected in the affair of Mahomed Reza Cawn, and Mr. Hastings ceased to employ him. On the arrival of the Supreme Council he gave in the curious information which I have already mentioned. It is remarkable, that when Lord Clive and the Secret Committee of 1765, were invested with all inquisitorial powers, Nundcomar gave in an information against Mr. John Johnston and other servants of the Company, similar to that which he afterwards gave in against Mr. Hastings, and upon a full enquiry, the information

was found to be void of the smallest foundation. Mr. Hastings commenced a prosecution against him. The majority, and Mr. Joseph Fowke, visited him in confinement; an attention which, of course, attracted the notice of every man in Indostan, and induced Nundcomar to suppose that he should be protected at all events by the Supreme Council.

I now come to the forgery. In 1762, a Gentoo was condemned to be hanged for this crime. The sentence was respite; and his Majesty was pleased to pardon the criminal; but I believe it was understood that the royal mercy would never again be extended to a similar offender. Be that as it may, Nudcomar, when he committed a forgery many years after this period, accompanied with the most aggravating circumstances, well knew the consequence if he should be detected. A lawyer, in 1772, was said, and truly, I believe, to have received ten thousand rupees for suppressing his knowledge of the affair. Nundcomar was well acquainted with the nature of our laws. He had had a hundred causes before the Mayor's Court at different times. Before his prosecutor complained, he offered to settle the affair for fifty thousand rupees. He repeated the offer after Nundcomar was in jail. Was Nundcomar's refusal supposed to be the result of conscious innocence? Was there a man in Bengal questioned the fairness of his trial, or the characters of the jurymen who found him guilty? Was he not universally deemed the most unprincipled of all the intriguing natives of Bengal? I am not an advocate for the judges; but as a most illiberal and unjust

motive has been assigned for their conduct, and their desire to screen Mr. Hastings from the effects of his information, I must assert, and I do it in the most solemn manner, that Mr. Hastings was not concerned, either directly or indirectly, in the apprehension, the trial, or the execution, of Nundcomar.

The judges might have respited the execution of the sentence; I wish with all my heart they had; but something may be urged in their favour upon this head. It was the first grand cause that came before them. I was at Berhampore, about 100 miles from Calcutta, at the time of Nundcomar's trial and execution. It was the common subject of conversation amongst men of all ranks. I have heard the sentiments of several natives, then, and since upon it. At the time, they very generally observed, that Nundcomar, though he was undoubtedly guilty, was too rich a man to be hanged; and since his death, it was said, he depended upon the interference of the Supreme Council, or he would have compromised the affair before his trial. Might not the judges be supposed to have acted as they did, from a desire to impress the natives with an idea of the justice and the impartiality of the Supreme Court? Would not the same set of men, who think Mr. Hastings capable of so villainous an action as influencing the judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature, or those judges of being influenced upon such an occasion; would they not have concluded that Nundcomar, if his execution had been respite, had obtained that favour by improper means?

In this review of the transactions in Bengal, I have avoided as much as possible every expression which may be supposed to convey a personal reflection. It is from necessity, not from inclination, that I have been obliged to contrast his conduct with any man's. However strong the provocation may have been, Mr. Hastings has upon all occasions attended solely to his own justification. It has been the fate of the Governor General, whose liberality of sentiment can only be equalled by his moderation, or rather by his contempt of money, to be engaged in a perpetual course of party contention. No man could less merit such a fate. With integrity that has defended him against the most tempting offers of private advantage, with abilities and application that have surmounted greatest difficulties, he has been reduced to the painful necessity of defending himself from the extraordinary charges of private rapacity, and a want of zeal for the interest of his employers. To the first I shall only observe, that he has now been almost ten years at the head of the administration in Bengal, a period much more than sufficient to answer the private views of any man, if to accumulate money was his object. To the last, I shall oppose the very flourishing state in which the Supreme Council found Bengal, and in which it continued, until foreign wars, and what is still worse, a continued opposition to the Governor General, exhausted our treasury, and diminished or almost annihilated the necessary power of Government.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE arrival of the Belmont enables me to carry on this review to the 31st of May last.

The Nizam remained inactive. In the latter end of April he expressed his wishes to join us in an alliance against Hyder Ally Cawn. On this account Mr. Holland remained at Hyderabad, although he had intended to quit it on account of his health. The Nizam's conduct is politic. Hyder aspired to the subaship of the Decan, and had applied to the King for sunnuds, through Nuzeph Cawn.

The engagement with the Rajah of Berar promises to be followed with the most important and beneficial effects. Colonel Pearse, in his march through Cuttac, received every assistance he stood in need of from the Naib of that province, and his camp was amply supplied with provisions. It is supposed he would be joined at Ellore by 2000 of the Berar horse; the remainder of that army was on its return to Naigpoore, except that part of it which was to act in conjunction with our forces against Guramundela. It is impossible to detail the negociation which brought on this agreement, but it reflects great honour upon Mr. Hastings, Mr. Wheler, who entirely concurred in opinion with him, and Mr. Anderson, through whose agency it was concluded. No chout, as has been represented,

was either given or promised, and our superiority appeared through the whole course of the negotiation.*

On the same day, the 2d of April, an agreement was signed between the ambassador of the Nabob of Arcot, and the Supreme Council on the part of the Company. By this agreement, the whole revenues of the Carnatic are appropriated for the services of the war. Credit being given to the Nabob's creditors for the actual collections from those districts which had been previously assigned to them. The utility of this agreement will forcibly strike every impartial person.

Lieutenant-colonel Camac's night attack on the camp of Madjee Sindia, was attended with very favourable consequences. Many of the chiefs who were compelled to join him, had come over to us; and an overture for a pacification had secretly been made by Sindia himself. His army was dispersed, except about 7000 horse under Ambajee Punt, which were surprised and totally defeated by Captain Bruce, the officer who had so great a share in taking the fortress of Gualier. These successes and the alliance with Moodajee Boosla gave us the fairest hopes of a speedy accommodation with the Marattas, and their junction with us against Hyder Ally Cawn; events

* Many severe strictures have been passed upon Mr. Hastings for this agreement: but the men best acquainted with Indian affairs, who have no interest in traducing his character, give him great credit for breaking the grand confederacy formed against us, and securing Colonel Pearse's march, at the trifling expence of sixteen lacs of rupees.

which Mr. Hastings most anxiously wishes to accomplish.

Provincial courts of justice had been established, agreeably to the Governor General's plan, and a controul vested in the chief justice. The Company and the natives, after six months experience, have sensibly felt the good effects of this regulation. To the former it is a very considerable saving; to the latter it has insured an impartial, and not an expensive distribution of justice.

The former mode of collecting the revenues has been abolished. An increase of 39 lacs or 390,000l. is expected from this regulation, which is Mr. Hastings's plan, formed in 1773, and the propriety of it confirmed by eight years experience of the former defective system.*

The revenue from salt will be 30 lacs of rupees or 300,000l. sterling this year.† The gentleman Mr. Hastings has placed at the head of this business, whose abilities and integrity have never been exceeded in Bengal, has made this declaration, and the authority is incontestible; so that the additional resources from the revenues of Bengal may fairly be estimated for this year at 690,000l.

The cargo of the Belmont is valued at 16½ lacs, or 165,000l. prime cost; the Neptune, which was obliged to return to Bengal, had 14½ lacs, or 145,000l. on board; and there remained in the Company's warehouses in Bengal, goods to the amount of 59 lacs, or 590,000l.

* The latest advices confirm the truth of this estimate.

† Increased to 570,000l. in 1782.

The investment for 1781-2 is fixed at 90 lacks, or 900,000l. and was providing when the Belmont sailed; so that for the ships of this season there will be goods to the amount of 1,600,000l. in Bengal.

The Company's dispatches by the Belmont will prove what exertions the government of Bengal is capable of when unanimity reigns in its councils.

On the 6th of July, Sir Eyre Coote gained a decisive victory over the army of Hyder Ally Cawn, and in the following month he was joined by the Bengal detachment, under the command of Colonel Pearse.

CONTINUATION.

The campaign of 1781, upon the coast of Coromandel was uniformly successful on our part. Hyder Ally was defeated by Sir Eyre Coote in August and September, the important fortress of Negapatnam was taken in November, and Trincomalee in the following month. It is no part of my present plan to enter into a particular detail of the operations of our army in the Carnatic. — Sir Eyre Coote received in the course of the campaign the most ample supplies of money and provisions from Bengal, and he attributed his success, in a great measure, to the unwearyed exertions of the Governor General and Council, for the support of the Presidency of Fort St. George, and the army under his command.

In the month of April 1781, Mr. Hastings carried into effect a plan which he had projected some time before, for collecting the revenues of Bengal and Bahar. The interference of Europeans in the interior parts of Bengal, and the various abuses her-

tofore alledged to have been committed by natives in the service of English gentlemen were effectually prevented. Every encouragement was held out to the Zemindars and farmers to induce them to attend to the cultivation and improvement of their several Zemindaries and farms; and a deduction was allowed to such of them as should pay their rents at Calcutta, (the Sudder.) The plan itself is in fact merely reverting to the system of collecting the revenues as established and practised when the Mogul empire was in its vigour. The three great points which Mr. Hastings had in view, have been most completely answered by the new system. — First, The ease and happiness of the native landholders and farmers: — Second, A retrenchment in the expence of collecting the revenues: — And third, An increase in the amount collected. The actual receipts for the year 1781 exceeded the receipts of the preceding year in the sum of three hundred thousand pounds.* Another very considerable branch of the Company's revenue in Bengal, was increased by Mr. Hastings to the sum of five hundred and seventy thousand

* The Select Committee made a report upon this plan in the month of May 1782, before it was possible that its effects could be known. It is something singular that they should condemn Mr. Hastings in the report alluded to, for taking the collections from Europeans, and putting them into the hands of the natives, but in the celebrated Ninth Report of the Select Committee, published the following year, the Government of Bengal is blamed for depriving the natives of every office of honour and emolument, which are rated to be held in the hands of Europeans.

pounds,

pounds, and in his opinion is capable of still farther improvement. In order to make this part of my narrative perfectly intelligible, I will state the different alterations which have taken place in the management of the salt revenue. It has been proved by incontrovertible evidence on a former occasion, that the manufacture of salt has invariably been a monopoly, either for the advantage of the state, or for that of individuals. This was the case long before the English possessed power in Bengal. Lord Clive established the monopoly for the benefit of the Company's servants, reserving a duty to the Company producing about one hundred and twenty thousand pounds a year. This scheme was disapproved of in England, and perhaps with reason. The trade in salt was ordered to be laid open, and a trifling duty to be collected upon it. The consequence of this scheme was, that this trade fell into the hands of wealthy individuals, and the duties fell considerably short of the moderate sum the Court of Directors had ordered to be collected. When Mr. Hastings succeeded to the government, he proposed, and it was determined to secure the manufacture of salt for the use of the Company. The scheme answered in some degree ; but after the establishment of the Supreme Council and the unfortunate dissensions which divided the Members, this branch of the revenue had dwindled to a mere trifle.

In 1780 Mr. Hastings brought forward a scheme for managing the salt revenue, which was adopted at his separate responsibility, and it has answered most

completely. It is a well known fact, that the natives do not pay more for the salt they eat now, than they did in former years, and prohibiting the importation of foreign salt into Bengal, is universally allowed to be a salutary and a wise regulation ; and to this too, in some degree, it is owing that the revenue upon salt has been so exceedingly productive in the two last years. When the importation of salt was permitted, it occasioned a considerable drain of specie from Bengal. The most accurate and authentic accounts that I have been able to procure of the returns made from Bengal by the importers of foreign salt are, that every native merchant bringing foreign salt to Calcutta, expended a fourth part of the produce of his cargo in coarse piece goods, and that the remaining three parts were actually carried from Bengal in specie *. As it is certain the Company may manufacture salt to a much greater extent than they now do, if there was an encreased demand for it, it was surely a politic and a wise measure to prohibit the importation of salt from the Maratta countries, or the Northern Circars. Many People, uninformed upon this subject, may suppose that the monopoly of salt is carried to a much greater length than it really is ; but it is a monopoly only in the first instance, for the monopoly of the salt is limited to the manufacture, and the native merchants, who purchase it from the Company on the spot where it is manufactured, may dispose of it as they please

* This drain may be fairly computed at ten lacks of rupees a year, through-

throughout the provinces, without being subject to any exactions whatever. The present plan differs most essentially from that established by Lord Clive. There are no European agents dispersed through the interior parts of Bengal, to dispose of salt, either on the Company's account or for the benefit of individuals. The operation is simple and easy. The advantage arises to the Company from the sale of the salt in the first instance, they do not interfere with the fair commercial profit of the merchant, who buys it from them; and it is undoubtedly true, that although the Company clears five hundred and seventy thousand pounds by the plan, the mechanic and husbandman pays no more now for the salt he consumes than he did in former years. The resources of Bengal were increased *above one million sterling* in the year 1782, from this scheme, the new mode of collecting the revenues, and the reduction in the first cost of the investment.

Another branch of revenue, for which the Company is indebted to Mr. Hastings, arises from the monopoly of opium; and this revenue will be considerably increased in consequence of the late treaty with Holland, which secures to us a free trade to the eastward of Bengal. Opium has always been a monopoly in the first instance; that is, a considerable sum of money must be advanced to the cultivator of the land which produces the poppy; and it requires, on the part of the person who makes the advances, the utmost attention, to prevent the opium being debased before it is packed up for sale. When the country government was in its vigour,

opium was a monopoly in the hands of some one of the most capital native merchants, whose interest it was to send it good and unadulterated to the sea ports of Bengal, for the foreign markets. It often happened, that the monopolist warranted it not only good, but that it should keep for a certain time; under this sanction the trade was carried on formerly, and produced rich returns in gold, and other articles of merchandize, into Bengal.

When the English acquired possession of the Duannee, the trade in opium was nominally laid open, though in fact the monopoly was, in a great measure, confined to our factory at Patna. The opium, however, was much debased from 1765 to 1773, and the trade considerably diminished in consequence. In 1772, when Mr. Hastings came to the government of Bengal, he secured a proportion of this trade for the Company. In 1773, the monopoly was taken into the Company's hands, and became a branch of their revenues. In 1775, it was debated by the Supreme Council, whether the trade should be laid open or not? General Clavering concurred in opinion with Mr. Hastings, that the manufacture of opium must be, what it ever had been, a monopoly.* All British subjects and natives were invited

to

* The reflection of the Select Committee on this declaration of General Clavering, is unfounded and unjust. They say it shews the General's opinion of the wretched state of the country. By no means. It was to prevent adulteration, and the loss of a valuable branch of export trade that opium had been a monopoly under the native Subadars;

to send in proposals for furnishing the Company with opium ; and Mr. Richard Griffith, whose terms were the lowest, obtained the contract. Mr. Mackenzie succeeded Mr. Griffith in 1777, and held the contract till 1781, on terms something more favourable for the Company than the former gentleman had agreed to ; and upon the same terms that it had been granted to Mr. Mackenzie in 1777, it was granted to Mr. Sulivan in 1781. This is the plain and simple state of a transaction which has been most shamefully and indecently misrepresented. The Supreme Council, who had every means of information before them, determined, in 1775, that opium must be a monopoly as it always had been ; Mr. Francis thought very properly, that it would be impolitic to give this contract on too low terms, because it was liable to abuses ; and on the equitable terms settled by Mr. Hastings, General Clavering, Colonel Monson, Mr. Barwell, and Mr. Francis, has it continued from 1775 to the present time. It produces to the Company about eighty thousand pounds a year, and will certainly be much more productive, as the demand for opium will increase considerably, which

Subadars ; and it would not have been in the power of any government whatever to have prevented adulteration, had the monopoly been abolished. The opium of Ghauzipire being manufactured with less care than the Patna opium, fetches an inferior price in all foreign markets. It is the duty of Government to see that the cultivator of the poppy gets a fair and equitable price for his labour ; and this was a sound argument urged by Mr. Francis against vesting the contract in the hands of the Company's servants at Patna, who were the proper checks upon the contractor.

must

must of course increase the price of it. I know of no monopolies in Bengal but those of salt and opium; if they are abolished, the Company will lose a revenue of seven hundred thousand pounds a year, which in all probability is by this time increased to a million; and I defy any man living to assign a single reason for the abolition of these monopolies, or to prove that salt and opium can be manufactured, except by the Company, or by individuals who are able to make very large advances of cash to the manufacturers, and who consequently will divide that profit amongst themselves, which is now secured to the Company, and makes a very considerable branch of their revenues.*

In the month of July 1781, Mr. Hastings left Calcutta; in order to visit the dominions of the Nabob Vizier of Oude. The insurrection at Benares,

* I will suppose for a moment, that the ungenerous and the unworthy modes practised by the enemies of Mr. Hastings to decry his character, were retorted by him upon his opponents, what would then be his reflections, or the reflections of his friends, upon the following transaction, I leave the world to guess. When the trade in opium was nominally laid open, it was undoubtedly a monopoly in the hands of the *Chief and Council* of Patna. In the month of July, 1782, when Mr. Robert Gregory was chairman of the Court of Directors, a letter was written by the Court to the Governor General and Council, in which they expressed their displeasure at their conduct, in granting the opium contract to Mr. Sullivan; they expressed their wishes that that, and all other monopolies, might be abolished; and they directed, that Mr. Robert Gregory's son should succeed to the *Chiefship of Patna*, though he was a younger servant than any one of the gentlemen who composed the Council at that place.

seems now so generally understood, that I shall say very little upon the subject. But I desire to submit the following striking facts to the consideration of the public:

1st, That Bulwant Sing, the father of Cheyt Sing, had behaved so treacherously to us in the war with Sujah Dowlah, that the Governor and Council ordered him to be dispossessed of the Zemindary of Benares in 1765, though it was afterwards judged prudent to continue him in the management of that country.

2d, That no instance has ever yet been produced of services rendered to our nation by Bulwant Sing.

3d, That Lord Clive protected him from the vengeance of Sujah Dowlah, and secured to him a degree of independence which he never before possessed.

4th, That upon the death of Bulwant Sing, Cheyt Sing, his son, by a woman of a very low cast, was continued in the Zemindary, through our influence with the Vizier, although by Colonel Harper's account it appears, that Mehipnarin, the present Zemindar, ought by the Hindoo laws to have succeeded Bulwant Sing.

5th, That Mr. Hastings in 1773, procured from the Vizier a confirmation of Cheyt Sing and his posterity in the Zemindary of Benares, of which Bulwant Sing had only been the aumli, or collector.

6th, That

6th, That by the treaty of Lucknow, concluded in 1775, the *sovereignty* of Benares and Ghauzipore, with all the *powers and rights* annexed to it, was transferred from the Vizier to the East-India Company.

7th, That the Supreme Council yielded to Cheyt Sing the Cutwallee and the Mint, and treated him with the utmost indulgence, and stipulated that no demands should be made upon him on account of his annual revenue beyond the sum stipulated.

8th, That when the war with France broke out, Cheyt Sing was called upon to contribute his proportion to the additional expence which the Company, *his Sovereign*, would incur. That he was ordered to maintain three battalions of Sepoys, and the expence fixed at five lacks of rupees a year.

9th, That the propriety of this demand was debated in the Supreme Council, and that Mr. Hastings insisted upon it we had never yielded to Cheyt Sing *that right, which every government inherently possesses, to compel all its dependencies to contribute by extraordinary supplies, to the relief of extraordinary emergencies.*

10th, That Colonel Harper has proved it to have been the custom of the Zemindar of Benares, to furnish his *quota of troops* to *his Sovereign*, when he was at war. That he gave this in evidence to the Select Committee in 1781, long after it was known in England, that the Supreme Council, as represent-
in the *Sovereign*, had compelled Cheyt Sing, by military

military force, to furnish his *quota* of *troops* during the war.

11th, That in 1779, and 1780, the Supreme Council compelled Cheyt Sing to pay five lacks each year—that the attention of the Court of Directors and his Majesty's Ministers was particularly called to the subject, because it was mentioned in the general letters of three successive years, but that no mark of disapprobation whatever was expressed, either by his Majesty's Ministers, or the Court of Directors.

12th, That when Sir Eyre Coote was on the point of embarking for the coast, in October 1780, when it was uncertain whether or not Bengal would be invaded by the Marattas, and every exertion on our part was necessary, to preserve the sinking interests of the Company, he laid before the Supreme Council, his plan for covering Bengal and its dependencies from the expected attack of our enemies.

13th, That for the general defence, he proposed Cheyt Sing's cavalry should in this critical hour be put under our orders, to which the Board unanimously agreed.

14th, That Cheyt Sing evaded this demand after promising compliance, precisely in the same manner as he had evaded the payment of the money, after positively promising to pay it.

15th, That Cheyt Sing never disputed the right of his Sovereign to demand military aid from him, but that he sheltered himself under the plea of poverty, which was notoriously untrue.

16th, That the disaffection of Cheyt Sing was apparent to every gentleman who passed through Benares and Ghauzipore for two years before his revolt. That the insolence of his people was a perpetual source of complaint, and that Mr. Fowke, when resident, professed his inability to procure redress from Cheyt Sing, for injuries offered by his men to English gentlemen passing through the country to Oude.

17th, That Cheyt Sing had laid in a very great supply of military stores of all kinds; that he kept up a communication with the different discontented Zemindars of Bahar and Oude, and had determined to throw off his allegiance to the Company, on the first favourable opportunity.

18th, That Mr. Hastings never did communicate to Cheyt Sing his design of fining him forty or fifty lacs of rupees. That the answer returned by Cheyt Sing to the Governor General's letter, was insolent and unsatisfactory, and will be pronounced so by every man conversant in the Persian language.

19th, That Mr. Hastings, by securing the person of the Raja, acted in perfect conformity to the customs of Indostan, and that every thing which subsequently happened, is chiefly imputable to the inhuman massacres of our troops.

20th, That Cheyt Sing was a weak, headstrong, and violent young man. That he kept very low company, was addicted to liquor and those pleasures in which the most abandoned people of Indostan only

only indulge themselves, and to dissipation of every kind. That he was not esteemd by the reputable inhabitants of Benares, and was undoubtedly both avaricious and rapacious.

21st, That the very great additional ease and security which he enjoyed as the subject of the East India Company, from what he or his father had known under Sujah Dowlah, instead of inspiring him with sentiments of gratitude, induced him to wish to throw off his dependence altogether, and in this he was undoubtedly encouraged by the means of vulgar men, who were his constant companions.

I believe the facts which I have stated will be very generally admitted, and I certainly mean to appeal to the knowledge of gentlemen of all descriptions, who have been of late years either in Oude or Benares, whether what I have said of Cheyt Sing, is not agreeable to the generally received opinion of his character in those countries. The other facts can be proved from the records at the India House.

A few days after Mr. Hastings retreated from Benares to Chanar, he was joined by the Vizier, and to the unmeaning declamation which I have heard of late, I shall merely reply, that if the Vizier had felt the British influence so exceedingly distressing and even intolerable, he had the fairest opportunity in the world of emancipating himself from it for ever, and at least of totally annihilating our power in Oude. He might have joined Cheyt Sing, and our destruction would have been almost inevitable.

So far, however, from doing this, he performed the most essential services, and after concluding a new treaty with the Governor General, he returned to Lucknow, perfectly satisfied with the interview. The rebellion of Cheyt Sing was effectually quelled in the month of October, and Mr. Hastings remained at Chanar with a view of settling with the Vizier's Minister the disordered state of the government of Oude. A plain relation of the events which reduced the dominion of the Vizier to the distress from which they are now recovered, will effectually clear Mr. Hastings from the charge of being the author of those distresses.

When Sujah Dowlah died, in February 1775, the Majority of the Supreme Council determined, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Hastings, that we should enter into a new treaty with his successor, which was concluded the following May. By this treaty, the Vizier, in a great measure, forfeited his independence. He ceded Benares to the English, and he agreed to an increase of subsidy for their troops stationed in his country. Mr. Hastings, at the time, acknowledged the importance of these advantages to the East India Company, but foretold, that in their consequences they would reduce the Vizier to a state of distress and insignificance. In the month of December following, the Vizier applied for British officers to command his troops. These were sent by the Supreme Council, and various appointments to offices in Oude were made in the course of the next year, by the Supreme Council, so that in fact, the govern-

government of Oude, may with some propriety, be said to have been conducted by the English Gentlemen, from the time the British officers were dispersed through his country, and a civil establishment fixed at his capital. In July 1777, Mr. Hastings regulated the military establishment of the Vizier, by putting the battalions under British officers upon the same footing as to pay and allowances with those in Bengal, and this was undoubtedly a very great relief to the Vizier, and a very necessary regulation for our own service. In November 1779, the Vizier found the establishment of English officers, which he had solicited himself, intolerably burthensome to him; and he wrote that very pathetic letter which Lord Sandwich quoted in one House, Mr. Fox in another, the Select Committee in the 11th Report, Mr. Debrett in the publication he calls a Report, and every news-paper editor in England, to his readers, on account, I suppose, of the figurative expression “When the knife has penetrated to the bone.”

It was absolutely impossible at that time to recall the officers, and to disband the battalions serving in Oude. The country must and would have been invaded by the Seiks, Nuzeph Cawn, and the Marattas; but Mr. Hastings very readily allowed the justice of the Vizier’s complaints, and with truth observed, that he was not responsible for the distressed state of Oude. The treaty of Benares was his treaty; *that* left the Vizier’s father in perfect possession of independence, and *he* was against any infringement of that treaty, when Sujah Dowlah died. One of the

first articles of the treaty concluded between Mr. Hastings and the Vizier was, that all the British officers in his Excellency's service, should be recalled, and that one of our brigades only, as settled by the treaty, with his father, should be stationed in his country, and paid by him. If the Vizier should in future apply for farther military assistance, it was to be granted to him. Every cause of discontent being removed by this arrangement, the Vizier returned to his capital; but as that part of the treaty which respected the Nabob Fyzulla Cawn, has been the subject of much enquiry here, as well as the case of the Begums; I shall relate the facts as they really exist, being convinced that Mr. Hastings's conduct will need no farther justification. The late Vizier concluded an agreement with Fyzulla Cawn, in October 1774, by which the latter was secured in the possession of a Jaghire producing about fourteen lacs of rupees a year. He was to be obedient to the Vizier, and to join him with 2 or 3000 horse and foot when he called upon him. Colonel Champion sanctioned this agreement by his signature. In 1778, the Vizier made great complaints of the conduct of Fyzulla Cawn. A gentleman was deputed to enquire into the truth of these complaints, and his report was highly favourable to Fyzulla Cawn, by whose express desire the Company became guarantees of the treaty. In October 1780, after the invasion of the Carnatic, when Sir Eyre Coote formed his plan for the defence of Bengal and Oude, he proposed that Fyzulla Cawn should furnish a body of 3000 horse,

agree-

agreeably to treaty, to join the Vizier's army. This request was not complied with by Fyzulla Cawn, and there were other complaints against him preferred by the Vizier. Mr. Hastings consented to withdraw the guarantee in September 1781, but expressly provided that no injury should be offered to Fyzulla Cawn, and he actually refused every solicitation in the following year from the Vizier, to permit him to resume Fyzulla Cawn's Jaghire, and to pay the amount in money. The reports relative to Fyzulla Cawn being very different, the Vizier, at the desire of the Governor General, deputed Major Palmer to him in January 1783, who concluded an agreement with him on the part of the Vizier, in the following month, by which every possibility of future dispute was avoided, as the Vizier agreed, under the guarantee of the Company, to the execution of a new treaty, which freed Fyzulla Cawn from every obligation to furnish military assistance, or any other aid whatever to the Vizier.

The following facts, authenticated as well as the foregoing, from the records of the East India Company, will fully justify Mr. Hastings for not interfering in the case of the Begum.

1st. That on the death of Sujah Dowlah, the Begum, his wife became possessed of all his treasures.

2d, That Mr. Bristow the English resident in Oude, represented to her that these treasures were the treasures of the State; and the property of the Sovereign her son.

3d. That

3d, That he complained to the Board of the conduct of the Begum and *her eunuchs*, who denied to submit to the Vizier's authority, and beat and abused the officers of his government.

4th, That the Begum consented to pay thirty lacs of rupees to her son, to be secured in the quiet possession of all the treasures of his father, and that the Vizier was compelled to submit to this agreement, Mr. Bristow being the guarantee of it.

5th, That Mr. Bristow observed to the Supreme Council in July 1776, that the Begum could claim no protection from this guarantee, having herself infringed the conditions of the treaty.

6th, That Mr. Bristow made repeated complaints to the Begum of the *rebellious conduct* of the eunuchs, that he pressed her on the part of the Vizier, to surrender her jaghires, and to receive the amount in money, observing that two rulers were too many for one country.

7th, That the extraordinary conduct of the Begum, was noticed by the Members of the Supreme Council, and in particular by Mr. Francis.

8th, That the Begum and her eunuchs excited a revolt in Oude, when the insurrection happened at Benares, is proved beyond a doubt.

9th, That Mr. Hastings consented to allow the Vizier to reclaim the treasures of his father, and to pay his mother the amount of her jaghire in future in money, as Mr. Bristow had proposed he should do in 1776.

10th, That

10th, That no violence of any kind was ever offered to the Begum or her servants, or any one man put to death. That she surrendered the treasures of the state by agreement, and has remained unmolested at Fyzabad, treated with every mark of respect.

11th, That these treasures were paid by the Vizier in liquidation of the debts of the East-India Company, and that no bad consequence whatever has or can result to the British interests in India, from the conduct of the Governor General and Council upon this occasion.

I have been more particular in stating those occurrences, because much pains have been taken in this country to impress the public with an opinion, that Mr. Hastings has forfeited our national character for moderation, justice, and good faith, in these instances, and that he had encouraged a son to plunder his mother in a most inhuman manner. I am positive I have stated the facts correctly; and I am not at all apprehensive that Mr. Hastings's character will suffer in the opinion of any unprejudiced man for the part he has taken, in compelling the Begum to relinquish the treasures of the state.

These are the most material occurrences of 1781, in India — but I cannot avoid joining with General Richard Smith, in applauding the wise and spirited conduct of Lord North, and his Majesty's Ministers of that day, who at a time of general distress, equipped so very considerable a reinforcement for, the preservation of our possessions in the East-Indies. In justice to Mr. Sullivan, and the late Sir William James, their great exertions at this period ought

also to be mentioned; the wise policy of writing such letters to Bengal, as tended to impress the different powers of India with an idea of the stability of the men who were to save India, if it could be saved, appears in a very strong point of view, when contrasted with the miserable policy which obtained when Mr. Gregory and Sir Henry Fletcher came into office.

It is impossible to continue this narrative without stating the effect which the change of Ministers, in 1782, had upon our affairs in India in the course of that year. Whatever part Lord North may have formerly or latterly taken with respect to Mr. Hastings, it is certain, that from 1780 to the time his Lordship resigned, he gave him very cordial support. For my part, I do not see how the Carnatic could have been relieved, or the operations of Government in India carried on at that most critical period, if Mr. Hastings's removal had been hourly expected. Lord North was undoubtedly convinced that a stable government was necessary, and that factions in our councils abroad had been as destructive there, as he at that time contended, they had been in England. I believe the administration of this country had not been changed many days, before Mr. Burke very publicly declared, that Mr. Hastings and Mr. Macpherson were to be removed:— and a resolution that the Directors ought to remove the Governor General, passed in May 1782. A majority of three in the Court of Directors did, in October, agree to Mr. Hastings's removal; but a majority of six to one in a General Court prevented

vented it. The first business attended to at the India House, after Mr. Gregory and Sir Henry Fletcher became the leading men, was to examine every act of Mr. Hastings's government; not so much with an intention of correcting evils, according to my judgment, as with a view of finding some transaction to condemn. I have seen many of the letters written at that period, in the Reports of the Select Committee, and upon my word, the fact appears to be perfectly as I have stated it. The advices received from India at this time were, that a French armament had arrived, that the Carnatic was in the utmost danger, that every effort that possibly could be made for its relief from Bengal had been made, and that prodigious supplies were daily going round. Advices were also received at this time, that the plan formed by Mr. Hastings for detaching Madajee Sindia from Guzerat, by invading his dominions, had effectually answered. That a separate peace with Sindia, and a total cessation of hostilities with the Marattas had been the consequences of it. A reasonable man would have supposed, that Mr. Gregory and Sir Henry Fletcher, with these facts before them, might have followed the example set them by Mr. Sulivan and Sir William James, that they might have commended the zeal and exertions of the Governor General and Council in these instances at least: — but I have never been able to discover a single line of approbation conveyed to Mr. Hastings for any one act, from the day Mr. Gregory became Chairman to the day of Sir Henry Fletcher's resignation.

Intelligence of the change of Administration in

England arrived at Bombay in August, and at Madras and Bengal in September 1782. This was accompanied with positive assurances, that Mr. Hastings would be immediately removed, and the effects of such assurances were instantly perceived. The Maratta negotiation remained suspended, and the government of India lost half its vigour. Fortunately, however, early in the month of December, Mr. Hastings was informed of the cordial support which he had received from his generous and independent constituents; the Maratta peace was very soon after fully and finally concluded, and the government of Bengal again acquired a degree of vigour and stability. I hope I shall not be thought to affirm too much, when I declare it to be my opinion, that Great Britain owes its preservation of India to the interference of the Court of Proprietors in favour of Mr. Hastings; because, though very worthy men may differ as to the degree of merit to which he is fairly entitled, it will hardly be said by any man who is acquainted with the genius and temper of the natives of India, that a new Governor General, arriving in Bengal when the Maratta treaty was so far advanced, could have concluded that treaty at the time it was concluded, or have raised the supplies for supporting the war in the Carnatic.

The principal events of 1782, in India, were, continuing the most liberal and effectual supplies in money and provisions from Bengal, to the Carnatic and to Bombay, securing a very large investment at a reduced price from Bengal for the English market, supplying China with the means of loading the Company's

Company's ships, by consigning opium to the super-cargoes, relieving Fort Marlborough, increasing the revenues of Bengal without oppression, and preserving our own revenues in perfect tranquillity.

In the month of March, 1783, the Greyhound packet arrived in Bengal from England. The General letter contained the sentiments of a majority of the Court of Directors on Mr. Hastings's conduct at Benares, with a declaration that such further resolutions as the Directors might come to, would be sent by a future dispatch to Bengal. This letter naturally tended to weaken the authority of the Supreme Council. The subject was so violently agitated in this country, that the private letters sent by the Greyhound, generally predicted the recall and the disgrace of the Governor General and Mr. Wheler. But I forbear to dwell upon this subject, because I trust it is now perfectly understood by all descriptions of men, that the Supreme Council ought to be supported from home, or the members who compose it immediately recalled. Lord North will do Mr. Hastings the justice to declare, that he has invariably held this language.

I have now given a summary account of the transactions in Bengal, to the period of our latest dispatches from Calcutta. It has been asserted by the author of the Ninth Report of the Select Committee, that the natives of Bengal are reduced to the lowest degree of depression and misery. A very long dissertation upon the trade of Bengal is also contained in the same Report. However respectable that authority may be deemed, I have not the least scruple of committing

mitting myself to prove, that since Bengal was under the British government, it never enjoyed so great a degree of internal prosperity as it does at the present moment. That Bengal has increased its population very considerably in every year since Mr. Hastings came to the government. That the manufactures have been greatly increased in point of quantity, and are still more improved in quality, in the ten last years, and in particular, the investments for the last three years are of a very superior quality to any since the Company acquired the Duannee. I have taken pains to ascertain these facts from the first authorities in London; and from these authorities I can also affirm, that raw silk is now provided in such quantities in Bengal, and so excellent in its kind, and in the improved mode of winding it, that the importation of raw silk from Italy has decreased very considerably in the two last years; and, in all probability, Bengal will in future entirely supply this valuable material for our manufactures in Great Britain. The culture of indigo is now carried to a considerable extent in Bengal, and will increase every year as the demand for it increases.* It has been asserted in the Ninth Report, that there is, in fact, no trade in Bengal, except that of the Company's investment from revenue. No assertion can be more untrue. The fact is, that for the last three years, a number of ships

* This is a new article of commerce from Bengal, and the indigo imported from thence, is of the very first quality. Let Mr. Burke examine some of the first merchants in London as to the increase and improvement of our Bengal trade. Rum and fine sugar were formerly imported into Bengal; we now export both articles in great quantities.

have arrived in Bengal from Denmark and Portugal. These ships have procured very rich cargoes, without the smallest difficulty ; and their whole amount may be estimated at one million sterling in each year, at the least. This fact is capable of proof. If the inland trade, and the exports to the Gulphs have fallen off of late years, nothing can be more unjust than to impute this decline to the oppressions of the English. Are we accountable for the confusions which have prevailed for many years in Persia, for the depredations committed by Nadir Shaw in Indostan, or the total destruction of the Mogul Empire ? All these events happened before we were known in India, except in the character of merchants. At what period of the history of Bengal has that country enjoyed so long a peace as since we acquired possession of the Duanee ? Under the dominion of the native princes, scarcely a year passed without an invasion of some part of the province, or in which several were not put to death, either for being engaged in actual rebellion, or from an apprehension of their disaffection to the despot in office. I do not know a single instance of a native of India being put to death, except by a regular and legal sentence, since we became the sovereigns of Bengal. Let the mild conduct of the English be compared with the inhuman cruelties perpetrated by the Dutch and the Portuguese, in their progress to empire in Asia, and we shall be less inclined to vilify those of our countrymen who have distinguished themselves in Indostan. When I heard a celebrated and illustrious officer declaim, in general terms,

terms, without specifying the murders, massacres, monopolies, and oppressions which have been committed in India, I was inclined to believe that he meant, as in his American manifesto, “ to speak daggers, but to use none.” I declare again, most solemnly, that neither murders nor massacres have been committed by the English in Bengal: oppressions may have been exercised in that country as in every other, but these have been greatly exaggerated indeed; and the only monopolies existing are those of salt and opium, which, without oppression, produce an immense revenue to the East-India Company. A very ingenious member of the House of Commons, has fixed the number of people who groan under every species of misery and oppression in India, at thirty millions;* and this misery he states to be brought upon them by the English. As to the number of inhabitants in Bengal, Bahar, and our part of Orissa, they may be estimated, I think, at twelve millions, because these countries may now be fairly supposed to have recovered from the depopulation occasioned by the famine of 1770. I have not a doubt myself, but that the inhabitants of Bengal will be doubled in a very few years, so firmly convinced am I that the people of our provinces suffer neither depression nor misery.

* The late Attorney-General was unquestionably right in stating that a charter was wax and parchment, when compared to the happiness of thirty millions of people. But the East-India Company have a right to expect that Mr. Lee will not, without enquiry, adopt the opinions of Mr. Burke, in order to violate property. Can he seriously think that we plunder and oppress thirty millions of people?

The inhabitants of Benares and Ghauzipore, under the sovereignty of the Company, may be estimated at two millions of people. They are neither rack-rented, nor disturbed in their possessions. The whole country has worn the face of tranquillity and prosperity from the time of Cheyt Sing's expulsion. The provinces of Oude, Corah, Allahabad, and Rohilcund, contain, I imagine, about eight millions of people. We have so far interfered in the government of these countries, since the accession of the present sovereign, that we should undoubtedly be responsible for the happiness of the natives ; and I have never yet heard that they were reduced to a state of depression and misery. The personal distress of the Vizier arose, as Mr. Hastings foretold, from our exacting very great concessions in territory and money from him in 1775. However it will hardly be disputed, that on the death of his father, the Vizier owed his life to the presence of our army ; and that we have preserved his dominions from falling into that state of confusion, anarchy, and distress to which the fine countries about Lahore and Dehly have been subject for the last thirty years. Admitting that our provinces, and those of our ally, contain twenty-two millions of people, I am confident that by far the greatest number would lament any revolution, by which they would revert to the state they were in before we acquired an influence in India. I am equally confident too, that the bulk of the inhabitants of no country upon earth, enjoy a greater degree of ease and happiness, than the lower ranks of

men in Bengal. The Northern Circars, which are under the government of Fort St. George, have been uninvaded during the late war; nor have I heard it asserted, that complaints of oppression have been received from the Zemindars of those districts. The balances due to the Company are doubtless very considerable; but we have not the least reason to suppose that inhuman means will be resorted to in order to recover them. The Carnatic has been desolated by a long and cruel war. Some parts of it, however, were in such a state as to afford a revenue to the Company; and as there was not an enemy in the country when the last accounts left India, we may reasonably hope that the distresses of the natives have been considerably alleviated. The countries to the southward of the Coleroon, were completely protected; and, as well as Tanjore, entirely exempted from the calamities of war, as appears by Lord Macartney's letter of March*; so that the number of inhabitants in the Circars, the Carnatic, and Tanjore, amount to seven millions. I do not know what authority Mr. Burke has to pronounce, that the thirty millions I have enumerated, groan under every species of oppression and misery. I have the utmost respect for the abilities, the ingenuity, and the invention of that gentleman; but I can now and then oppose a fact to a flourish.

* We have received advices from Madras of the 8th of September, and from Bengal of the 6th of August, since this Narrative went to the press. All was peace in India, except with Tippoo Saib, and we were negotiating a treaty with him. In the mean time we had three armies ready to act against different parts of his dominions, should he refuse to accede to reasonable terms; and all the French troops had quitted his standard.

Having concisely related the principal events which have occurred in India during Mr. Hastings's administration, I cannot conclude this narrative without taking notice of the late extraordinary proceedings in this country relative to the Governor General and the East India Company.

Some time before the rise of the last session of Parliament, a Committee of Proprietors waited upon Lord North and Mr. Fox, the Ministers of that day, in order to explain their sentiments of the conduct of Mr. Hastings, who had in the most explicit and manly terms, called upon the Court of Directors, and his Majesty's Ministers, either to support or to remove him. The Ministers, though thus earnestly called upon, suffered the session to pass over without bringing any proposition before Parliament. Mr. Hastings had informed his constituents, that the revenues of Bengal were increased a million sterling, and that peace would be shortly concluded with the Marattas. Perhaps his Majesty's Ministers confiding in this declaration, were less anxious to push forward the violent measures which they have since produced; but they were willing, at the same time, that the actual government of India should be as much degraded as possible; for on the last day of the last session, Mr. Burke moved, (and Lord North seconded the motion,) for certain papers to be laid before the House at their meeting, relative to transactions of the year 1775. What renders this matter the more curious is, that the papers moved for had all been perused in 1776 by Lord North, who then wished to remove Mr. Hastings, because certain charges

were exhibited against him which were never attempted to be proved ; and at that time too, Mr. Burke's friends and patrons were his most strenuous defenders. In the course of the summer, two packets arrived from India ; they brought a confirmation of the Maratta peace, and the most satisfactory accounts of our affairs in Bengal and its dependencies. It appeared also that, that every effort had been made by the Supreme Council for the support of the British interest in every other quarter of India. A few days previous to the meeting of Parliament, the Court of Proprietors, assembled, and voted, with one dissenting voice, the thanks of the Company to Mr. Hastings and his Council, for their great exertions in the public service, and a request that Mr. Hastings would not quit his government until peace was fully restored.

Mr. Fox, on the first day of the session, gave notice, that in a week he would move for leave to bring in a bill to regulate our Governments in India. His speech on the day he opened his plan, was indeed a most extraordinary one. — It will be sufficient to say, that every charge brought against Mr. Hastings on that day, has been often refuted. Lord North was not then present, or he would have corrected several of his honourable colleague's misrepresentations. I forbear to detail the progres of a bill which, I believe, is now universally reprobated without doors : — Suffice it to say, that in so far as Mr. Hastings is concerned, Mr. Fox adopted all the prejudices of his most inveterate enemies. Some mistakes perhaps he was led into by misinformation. In particular, Sir

Henry Fletcher hazarded an assertion, for which there was not the smallest foundation in fact. The honourable Baronet surely could not do it in order to give Mr. Fox an opportunity of sounding the praises of Lord Macartney, or of going out of his way to gratify the friends of the late Lord Pigot, by wantonly traducing the character of Mr. Hastings. The fallacy of Mr. Fox's reasoning becomes more and more apparent to the public every hour. He pretends to adopt Mr. Burke's pretended idea, that thirty millions of people are oppressed by the English in India. This cannot be his real opinion; if it was, would he have suffered the last session to pass over, though called upon by Mr. Hastings, without doing or attempting any thing? Mr. Fox has never ventured to argue upon the actual state of India, when the latest advices came from thence: on the contrary, he dwelt upon transactions which happened fourteen, twelve, and ten years ago. Mr. Burke acted with less consistency; for he opposed the Regulating Act of 1773, and was then the assertor of the Company's rights, and the defender of the characters of the Company's servants.

Perhaps it will not be very becoming in me to make any observations on the capacity of the Director, nominated by Mr. Fox for the future Government of India. The noble Lord at the head of the Seven, is universally allowed to be a most amiable and virtuous character. But to be at the head of such a commission, requires a thorough knowledge of India, and the strictest impartiality. That the noble Lord is totally deficient in these requisites, must

must be clear to every one who heard his Lordship read one letter, dated in Bengal in 1769, and another in 1775, stating abuses or oppressions in the collection of the revenues, and arguing from those documents in favour of Mr. Fox's bill. The mode of collecting the revenues has been totally altered since those periods. I should scarcely suppose that the four Directors, whose names are inserted after the noble Earl's, have had either opportunity or inclination to study the affairs of India, as they must be studied by any man or body of men who mean to govern that country for the advantage of this. Mr. Gregory and Sir Henry Fletcher have been concerned undoubtedly for some years in the affairs of India. The former was many years a free merchant in Calcutta; the latter has been several voyages as a Mate or a Captain of an Indiaman; yet, with all due deference to the splendid abilities of both these gentlemen, I am yet to learn what particular services were performed by either of them, as Chairman of the Court of Directors. India has, undoubtedly, been saved by the exertions of Mr. Hastings, the Supreme Council, Sir Eyre Coote, &c. abroad; and by the assistance afforded to them from home in Lord North's administration, at the requisition of Mr. Sullivan and Sir William James, not merely in the reinforcements sent to India, but in that cordial and steady support and confidence, which should subsist between the government of Great Britain and its dependencies in India at all times, but more particularly in the hour of difficulty and distress.

It would lead me from the proper subject of this
review,

review, was I to insert the remarks that must naturally occur to every man, who reflects upon the mean and unworthy acts which have been practised for some time past, to injure Mr. Hastings in the public opinion. The Reports of a Committee have been sold as pamphlets, unaccompanied by vouchers or explanations. What is called the Eleventh Report of the Select Committee, was sent under a blank cover to several noble Lords, while the bill was depending. This Report contained several strictures on these letters which Mr. Hastings had written to the Court of Directors. In one of them he had inclosed an account of sums received by him as presents, amounting to two hundred thousand pounds, and carried to the Company's credit. The Eleventh Report does not contain any copy of these letters, or of this account, though wonderful ingenuity is displayed by the compiler of it, in pointing out certain inconsistencies, which must remain unexplained for the present; but I am sure no man living, who reads the Eleventh Report, will conceive that the following paragraph was contained in Mr. Hastings's letter to the Directors of the 16th of December, 1782: "If I appear in any unfavourable light by these transactions, I resign the common and legal security of those who commit crimes or errors. I am ready to answer any particular question that may be put against myself upon honour, or upon oath." I am so confident that Mr. Hastings will be able to explain fully and satisfactorily his reasons for concealing for a time, from

from whom the several sums alluded to were received, that I earnestly wish he may be publicly called upon to relate every minute circumstance attending the receipt of each separate article in the account; such an order, I trust, has already been sent to him. It would have been candid, therefore, in the compiler of the pamphlet, entitled the Eleventh Report, if he had waited for the arrival of the explanation; but if he really thought he had caught the Governor General at a disadvantage, it would have been just and honest in him, when he was commenting upon letter, to have inserted either the letter entire, or at least the very material paragraph which I have quoted.

A man of plain understanding might be led to suppose, from the ungenerous, paltry, and unfair practices, which all men have noticed for these two years past, that to a party in this country, the removal of Mr. Hastings from the government of Bengal, was of infinitely more consequence than the preservation of our Indian empire. Whether to the public measures of one set of men, or to the intemperate opposition of another set of men, we may attribute the loss of America, I cannot determine; but I believe upon my conscience, that the violent bill, proposed and supported by parties formerly so hostile to each other, would have deprived us of our possessions in Indostan, had it passed into a law.

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